00097850

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016

THE BOOK

WITHOUT A NAME.

VOL. I.

Also, just Published,

WOMAN AND HER MASTER;

OR, THE HISTORY OF THE FEMALE SEX FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY.

BY LADY MORGAN.

2 vols. post 8vo. price 21s.

"Lady Morgan has imparted to history the charm of romance. We have read her series of rapid but brilliant and vigorous sketches with an interest which many a novel fails to excite."—*Weekly Chronicle.*

"Lady Morgan has in these volumes undertaken to investigate the position which woman should occupy in society. She has sought, in the records of the past, guidance and direction for the future; she has subjected the pages of history to a vigorous moral analysis, testing their facts with the skill of a critic, and deducing results with the wisdom of a philosopher."—*Athenæum.*

Josephine Clarke, del.

Th. Charles Morgan

Published by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough St. 1841

THE BOOK

WITHOUT A NAME.

BY

SIR T. CHARLES AND LADY MORGAN.

97850

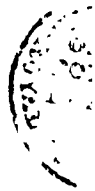
Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal.

POPE.

NN 92

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1841.

824·8
Mor/Bon
·97850

LONDON:
P. SHOBERL, JUN., 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET,
PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The reason for not giving a name to the following papers, is simply that their authors had no name to give. The golden age of literature, when titles for books were "plenty as blackberries," when publications were few, readers many, and authors (in the Horatian phrase) were things to point the finger at—that golden age is passed and gone. Now, every one writes, few have leisure to read; and an unpreoccupied title is more difficult to be met with, than the industry which goes to write a volume, or the enterprize that undertakes to publish it.

This difficulty will be more readily acknowledged, when a further statement is made, that the present venture is, for the most part, a mere funding of literary exchequer bills, a gathering into the fold, of certain stray sketches, some of which have already appeared in different leading periodicals of the last ten or fifteen years. Such re-publications are a prevailing fashion of the day, (to which, by the bye, we are indebted for much

pleasant reading, that otherwise would have been "in the great bosom of *oblivion* buried"); and even while these pages were passing through the press, more than one appropriate title, under consideration, had been seized on by others, who, in thus "filching from us our good name," had so far "made us poor indeed," that they reduced us to the necessity of preferring no name at all, to a bad one.

The original articles which have been added to the collection, (owing to the continued illness, for many months, of one of the authors,) have been taken, rather than selected from a portfolio, where many such "unfinished things" have from time to time been deposited, and all but forgotten.

Books like the present were allowed, in former days, to find sanctuary in the parlour window-seat, then the great receptacle for whatever, in literature, might be idly taken up, and as carelessly dropped. At present, they may aspire to become "bench fellows" with that large class of miscellaneous compositions, the albums, annuals, books of beauty, and beautiful books; and if got up "to match," may make their way to the drawing-room table, along with other elegantly-bound volumes, "to be had of all the booksellers" and venders of knick-knacks in the kingdom.

CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

BY LADY MORGAN.

	PAGE
Le Cordon Bleu	16
Milton's House	125
St. Alban's Abbey, No. 1	138
——————— No. 2.	151
Memoirs of the Macaw of a Lady of Quality	257

BY SIR T. C. MORGAN.

The Public	1
A First Lesson in Reading	51
The Absurdities of Men of Merit	70
An Essay on Coals	89
Curiosity	106
Rural Pleasures	167
A Defence of Punning	184
The Pleasures of Hearing	202
The English Malady	223
Liberality	238
Luxuries and Necessaries	317
Memoir of Dr. Botherum	333

THE PUBLIC.

"Tout le monde méprise les harangères; cependant, qui oseroit risquer de les offenser, en traversant la Halle?"

CHAMPFORT.

IN the olden times, when the public was rarely addressed, save from a tub, a ladder, or the foot-lights of the stage, it was a modest, well-behaved body corporate, as heart could desire. Setting aside an occasional *lark*, a sportive riot about a jew-bill, or the innocent burning of a Popish chapel, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, it kept the peace, as a discreet public should do. Since, however, it has become a power, and is consulted by cabinets and congresses, it has grown as capricious and tyrannical as other irresponsible autocrats. Puffed up with daily offerings of mouth-honour, administered by all who live by its patronage (from the Lord Chancellor on his woolsack, to Mr. Professor Warren, behind his

dingy counter, inclusive), there is nothing on earth, of which its *Dis æqua potestas* does not think itself capable.

"The public," says Dumont, "is a tribunal worth more than all the others put together;" and the prevalence of this opinion probably is the reason why that body is constituted the great referee of injured innocents. Does an actress quarrel with her part, or her partner? Is a *Prima Donna* dissatisfied that the manager is not her devoted admirer? She straightway files her bill before the public, in the columns of the daily press. Does an author think himself regularly "cut up" by a hostile reviewer, he forthwith cites him to answer interrogatories before the same authority. Is a gentleman's nose pulled, or his coat beaten "after the Connaught fashion,"* out comes his letter to the public, with "a statement of facts:" or, if a common swindler is roughly handled by the inquisitors of Bow Street, he intreats the public to suspend its judgment till the day of trial.

But, as if this were not enough, there is no end of the villanous cajoleries, in which such appeals are ordinarily enveloped. The commonest vender of the commonest article crams his advertisements with fulsome epithets, in all the hyperbole of oriental exaggeration. It is, forsooth, a humane public—a charitable public—a discriminating public (God bless the mark!)—and, above every thing,

* *Id est*, on the person of its owner.

a religious public; while the poor dupe, taking it all for granted, gives itself credit for every virtue under the sun, and *quemlibet occidit populariter*, hunts any man to the death, who presumes to think for himself, and bows not the knee before its self-arrogated infallibility.

That a writer of so logical a turn of mind as Dumont should have ranked public opinion above all other tribunals, is perfectly inexplicable. "Though susceptible of error," he continues, "this tribunal is incorruptible. It tends perpetually to instruct itself; and it contains all the wisdom and justice of the nation."

The compliment, to be sure, is but equivocal; and perhaps it was intended merely as a quaint and sly bit of irony. The public may surely come by its decisions more rapidly than the Court of Chancery, and yet not be *very* expeditious: it may be governed more closely by common sense than our courts of law, and yet not be remarkably intelligible; it may act with more wisdom than "the great unpaid," without being justly set down for a conjuror. Then, as for its incorruptibility, is it not the same public, which the strongest laws against parliamentary corruption cannot bind? and for whose benefit insolvent bills are framed with meshes that would let slip a whale? What, if a direct bribery of the public be not as easy, as it was in ancient Rome, when corn was distributed and games celebrated to purchase the voices of the people, ingenuity finds a thousand by-ways for

arriving at the same end. Public opinion is notoriously self-interested. The very imputed excellence of its decisions rests on the supposition, that the sum of individual interests constitutes the common good; and that self-seeking, consequently, must be the safest basis, on which a judgment can stand. Whatever parade parliamentary orators may make of the wisdom and justice of their proposed measures, they always take care to conclude with a show of something to be made, or saved, by the operation. In the same spirit, and with equal knowledge of the world, advertising tradesmen lay less stress on the beauty or goodness of their wares, than on their cheapness; and they head their paragraphs, in well-leaded capitals, "full twenty *per cent.* under prime cost."

On the score of self-instruction, it must be allowed that the public does possess a certain tendency, or velleity rather, to learn: but it is ἀυτομαθὴς τὶ καὶ ὀψιμαθὴς, that is to say, it comes at a truth when every body knows it, and not before: *videlicet*, some century, or so, after the wise have commenced beating the facts into its silly noddle, and have been fined, imprisoned, spit upon, and reviled for their pains. Hitherto, the public has very closely resembled that converted Catholic gentleman, who "renounced the errors of Popery, and embraced those of the Protestant church," exchanging merely one set of prejudices for another; or if haply, at long intervals, it has enjoyed a lucid moment, the temporary gleam of light has been

followed by a deeper plunge into the pristine darkness.

As yet, the public has very constantly been doomed to follow in the career of intelligence, to sit below the salt at the table of knowledge, and to feed on the scraps and orts of philosophy, which the more acute portion of mankind abandon, as no longer wholesome and digestible.

Then for the matter of "wisdom and justice," the word "Public" is but the representative of a congregation, including all the fools and knaves of the community—a large dilution of the few persons whose opinion a man of sense would take on the boiling of a potato. How, then, can an accumulation of their several absurdities and rogueries be converted into wisdom and justice? All the first judgments of the public, indeed, are prejudices, adopted on the *ipse dixit* of some fashionable authority; and, if not always false, they are commonly used sophistically, to gloss over some political wrong; while a correction of the error lags haltingly behind, till the mischief is completed and rendered irrevocable.

"*Interdum vulgus rectum videt,*" says Horace, and it was a large admission from one so knowing; but the worst of it is, that the vulgar are not confined to a single grade of society. Vulgar errors are to be found prevailing in the first, as well as the lowest ranks; and they are too often cruel, as they are false. Such, for example, is that vulgarest of the vulgar — the judging men and measures by

the event.* Such, too, are the placing criminality in punishment, and identifying virtue with stars and garters.

It is another point of vulgar wisdom, that public documents, like gift horses, must not be looked in the mouth; nor any nonsense be questioned, that is delivered *ex cathedra.* To doubt that a wig is wisdom, a red coat courage, or a bar-gown wit, would consign the sceptic to general reprobation: but to deny that a well-stocked purse is a receipt in full for every virtue, would incur the risk of interdiction *ab igne et aqua.*

The judgments of the public being thus lightly formed, it is not surprising that its favourites should be as lightly taken up and let down again. Where now is the popularity of Dr. Johnson? where that of George the Third, "the good old king"? Blucher, if he were alive, might walk the streets unnoticed; and the sun of Brodum's Balm of Gilead is outshone by the superior brightness of Mr. Morrison's pills.

Can that public, moreover, be really wise, which is so easily led by the ears? Eloquence is its delight; and experience in vain declares that "fine words butter no parsnips." Even foul words possess an unctuous quality, which causes things to be

* Nullus est tum sapiens, mitis, et formosus,
Tam prudens virtutibus, cæteris famosus,
Quin stultus reputabitur, et satis dispectus,
Si Fortuna prosperos evertat effectus.

These verses are attributed to King Edward the Second.

swallowed, of much harder digestion than that stringy esculent. The time is not so far distant, when, to carry the worst measures, nothing more was necessary than an energetic appeal to national antipathies, a rhodomontade of "British valour," or "good old English feeling." And though a bitter experience acting on men's pockets (the shortest cut to their brains) may have since discredited these particular watchwords of party, *uno avulso non deficit alter*. The words indeed are changed, but the tune continues the same: the old formulæ may have fallen into disuse, but newer and more popular claptraps have inherited their vogue—*et voilà tout*.

If we estimate the opinion of the public by its overt acts, all history teems with traits, the reverse of advantageous. Was it not public opinion that cast Manlius from his rock, for striving to protect the people against a tyrannical oligarchy? Was it not public opinion which became tired of hearing Aristides for ever called the just — that administered the cicuta to Socrates—or (to come nearer to our own times) that shut Gilbert Wakefield in a prison, and burned Priestley's house over his head, because they lifted their voices against a mad and unprincipled war? Cobbett, who must have known the public to a nicety, having *exploited* its credulity through the greater part of a long life, first by humouring the loyalty and *altarity* of the times, and afterwards by abusing kings, ministers, and "the old woman of Threadneedle Street," never

made a better hit, than in his sarcastic calling us a thinking people — the people, whose penal code is written in blood, a thinking people !—the eaters of taxed bread a thinking people ! ! It shows little power of thought to found morality upon station, and to take philosophy from party reviews—to bite at every commercial bubble, to uphold every established abuse, simply because it is established, or to take alarm, whenever the political shepherds amuse themselves with crying wolf in broad daylight.

It may perhaps be objected, on the strength of the change in watchwords, already noticed, that the errors of the public are not immortal, and that opinion is ever on the advance. True: we are old enough to have outlived many well-conditioned absurdities; and that, too, in spite of the strongest efforts to sustain them. But what are these among so many?

Quid te exempta juvat spinis e pluribus una?

Are no new sophisms rising into vogue? Are no efforts making and favourably received, to revive such as are defunct, or to bolster such as are falling to ruin? Who shall say that humbug does not fully maintain its ancient rule, or that plausibility has lost any of its prescriptive right to pass for reality? Society seems capable of bearing only a certain quantity of truth at a time; and those who strive to overdose their contemporaries, do little more than hurry them prematurely into some new absurdity.

If the public, then, be such an hospital of incurables, why, it will be asked, set about curing them? The question is a smart question, but rather hastily put. Who said that any such design was on foot, or that the Essays now offered for perusal have any such *arrière-pensée?* Books in this age (and it is their distinctive merit) are written, as Peter Pindar's razors were made — to sell; and the author who risks his peace of mind in the vain attempt to make mankind either wiser or happier than they choose to be, is a mere philanthropic Quixote.

It is all very well to talk of these matters, *en thèse generale,* and, in a half-jesting way, to notice absurdities, which each reader may lay to the account of his neighbours; but to sit down doggedly to prove yourself more knowing than the mass of mankind, and to disturb social order, by making folly discontented, or roguery distrustful, is a sort of Curtius-like proceeding, at which the very children would scoff. Never was it more necessary than now to chatter with the apes,* and howl with the wolves. Think with the wise, if you can; but keep your thoughts to yourself, if you don't like being stoned. Let your opinions be concealed even from the brother of your love, and the wife of your bosom. But, in mixed societies, fail not also to add a strong touch of the hypocrite, to boot, if you would not be the butt of every paltry

* Εν θηρίοις δὲ καὶ πιθηκιᾶς ὄντα, δεῖ εἶναί πίθηκον. LUCIAN.

knave, who desires to derive profit or pleasure from gibbeting all those who "wear their hearts upon their sleeves for (the public) daws to peck at."

In publishing, an author of course desires to be read. But to be read, he must humour the mass of purchasers, and not simply consult the select few. Hannah Glass is a much better thumbed author than Babbage or Bentham; and Sir Walter himself would have been infinitely less popular than he is, had he set up as a teacher or reformer of mankind. He who would see his volume on every club-table, the ornament of every boudoir, must flatter and encourage every fashionable vice and reigning folly; must support every interest on earth but that of mankind. Let such a man write religious novels, record the experiences of hysterical spinsters, and celebrate the conversions of bedlamites, or the election of rope-sanctified sinners; but let him not touch the sacred landmarks of gothic ignorance, nor lift the veil through which his great great grandfather viewed law, physic, divinity, and the nature of things.

If possible, let him indeed make it a rule in writing to confine himself to those "airy nothings" *qui ne tirent pas à conséquence.* Twaddle is your only wear; and common-place, which disturbs no one's complacency, has the readiest market. Among all the favourites of our times, Byron was perhaps the only original thinker, and the exception admirably proves the rule.

Such are the principles which steer an author safely over the rocks of criticism; and the reader

is earnestly requested to believe that by them the pages here offered to his notice will be squared.

It is a monstrous abuse which has crept into fashion among readers of a certain class, "*qui entendent finesse, et qui n'entendent pas raison,*" to be discontented with what lies on the surface of the page, and to exert a perverse ingenuity in prying into the author's concealed doctrines; and that, too, for the worst purposes of malice and detraction. A true and faithful reader will take an author on his word, and will not indulge in any superfine interpretations; but even when he cannot seize the drift of an argument, will rather suspect his author of trifling than of mischief. It is hard, indeed, because a man deals in manuscript, if he may not sometimes be simple without deceit, or silly without malice. Against such *nasuti homines* as these, it is as well, once for all, to enter a protest; and to request all who amuse themselves with fishing for under-currents of meaning, and in hunting for mares' nests, if they must poach on this manor, at least to remember that the mischief is of their own making.

"Non me ne fate autore, io non vo' guai."

If Socrates, as the great Frederick said, preferred the poison cup to holding his tongue, that is no precedent for other people. No imputations, therefore, of felonious wisdom, if you please, good gentlemen: stick to the simplicity of the text, and keep your quibbles for a better occasion.

On the other hand, there is a class of persons

mightily given to the enthusiastic, by their own chimney-corners — great admirers of public devotion in others — flaming patriots when it costs nothing; but deplorably complaisant when there is any thing to be got by subserviency. These will open upon us like a pack of foxhounds, with an outcry about moral cowardice, dereliction of duty, base compromise of principle, and all that sort of thing.

According to these persons, if the world goes wrong, the fault is with its instructors. The fanatic and persecuting public are honest in their cruelty and blindness. They know no better; and if writers will but teach them, they will be equally eager to defend the right. If society has grown up from its nonage, to the point of civilization at which it stands, there can be no reason why it may not be still further corrected. The people come into the market of knowledge and lay down their pence freely for such shreds and patches of truth as their schoolmasters are willing to afford them for their money. Instead of grumbling, then, at the public, of which you yourself are but a component atom, open your budget manfully, take out a handful of the truest truths, and boldly fling it in the face of mankind. Yes, and be held up to ridicule as the scapegoat of honesty; to be kicked, and cuffed, and disfranchised, and disqualified for one's pains.

It is no such pleasure to forfeit the sympathies of society. Worth, itself, may be

> "but a charter,
> "To be mankind's distinguished martyr;"

and "*vitam impendere vero*" is certainly a very dignified and respectable position; but not "all alone, Proudy"—not to no earthly purpose. There can be no manner of doubt, that if all who hold sound doctrines would manfully own them, and would "keep together in their chivalry" as steadily as the wilful teachers of error, they are numerous enough to win public opinion, and force the perverse to respect their liberty of thought and speech.

It is certain that the partizans of moral truth betray their cause ten times a day, not only by an unworthy timidity which prevents them from openly displaying it, but what is infinitely more infamous, by joining in the outcry against honester and bolder men. *En attendant*, however, it is rather too much to expect from an individual that he should risk his eyes and his cheeks, in a solitary and unaided effort to "bell the cat."

A popular writer has well observed, that "though those coarse correctors of honesty, the gibbet and the stake, are gone out of fashion, yet the ingenuity of power has invented other methods of inforcing silence or belief, not quite so effectual, but more painful to the mind of the sufferer."

The chain may be broken and the thumbscrew may rest in the cabinets of the curious, but influence and detraction are instruments of torture no less effectual; and these, thanks to the slavish readiness of the masses to compromise their own interests, and to join in the cry against those whom they ought to protect, are still in the fullest acti-

vity. Like the Irishman in the water, they will be drowned, and nobody shall help them. The utmost mercy to be expected at their hands by the man who would do violence to this amiable propensity, and would enlighten the public, whether it will or no, is to be shut up in Bedlam, with the other categories of lunatics, who are insane in a different way from those of their fellow-sufferers, who are permitted to go at large.

Once more, therefore, and once for all, "notice is hereby given" that these volumes are volumes in the queen's peace, volumes with no offence in their mouths; that they are desirous of enjoying their own sense or nonsense, without let or molestation to the sense or nonsense of the world at large. Those who delight to imagine that "*les vessies sont des lanternes*," are welcome to their whim, provided they will leave other folks alone, and not cry *haro* against all whom in their wantonness they may suspect of being suspicious.

Nay, if, in spite of such protestations, some reasons in behalf of forbidden truths should by accident have crept into these innocent pages, such reasons are at once admitted to be of no avail, against any lawful or customary authority to the contrary. Those in possession are hereby acknowledged to have a plenary right to make fair and foul weather at their pleasure, and to place the heart on whichever side of the body it seems good to them. Whenever it is asserted that such a thing "must be," that "such a consequence flows from such and

such undisputed premises," this is intended as a simple declaration of the historical fact, that such is the case with respect to the understandings of those who know no better — of those obstinately freethinking logicians, who will have a will of their own. It is not pretended that such consequences are theologically true; nor is it meant to force any to believe the evidence of their own senses, if their instincts or their interests (which are often one and the same) happen to point another way.

LE CORDON BLEU.*

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED WORK.

"La gastronomie n'est autre chose que la réflexion qui apprécie, appliquée à la science qui améliore."

We live in awful times! By *we*, I mean we women. Power has departed from us, passions are things over which we no longer have control, love has become a calculation, matrimony a spec., and friendship (that peculiar attribute of our sex) "but a name." Bright eyes now shine in vain,

* "Cordon bleu," an honorary distinction conferred on the first class of female cooks in Paris, either in allusion to their blue aprons, or to the order, whose blue ribbon was so long considered as the adequate recompense of all the highest merit in the highest classes. The Fermier General who built the palace of the Bourbon Elysée, became not more celebrated for his exquisite dinners, than for the moral courage with which he attributed their excellence to his female cook, Marie, when such a chef was scarcely known in the French kitchen; for when Marie served up a "*petit diner delirant*," she was "called for" like other prima-donnas, and her health drank by the style of "*Le cordon bleu.*"

, when opposed to the sparkle of a cigar; the prettiest ancle may withdraw itself within the cumbrous comforts of a trailing petticoat, for it is powerless against breasts protected by egotism or a Petersham. Cinderella's slipper might be sent round from club to club, without increasing the throb of a single heart, even in "the guards and Crockford's." Neither *la jeune France*, nor the dandyism of England could now furnish a man to extatise over a *corsage* with St. Preux, or to envy with Waller the pressure of a zone: though

> Give me but what that girdle bound,
> Take all the rest the world goes round,

might still be applied, in the ardor of jockeyism, to the girth of the favourite of the field, it never would apostrophize the *cincture* that marks the symmetry, "fine by degrees, and elegantly less," of the best dressed *subject* of Victorine or Carson. The days when the rape of the lock agitated society to its centre, are now like the days beyond the flood; and the times when women were all charming, and men all charmed, are as the nights of Arabian fiction.

Women of those times—where lay your secret? My own opinion is, that it lay in the kitchen!

"*Ma belle*," said the gallant Henri IV. to one of Marie de Medici's maids of honor,—"*quel est le chemin à vôtre cœur? Par l'eglise, Sire!*" was the prompt and piquant reply: but had those female *Sommités* of the reign of his grandson, the Maintenons, the Contis, and the Soubises been interrogated before a star-chamber of coquettes, as

to what was the true road to royal hearts, they might, on their own experience, have answered, *par vos côtelettes, Mesdames.*

It is a fact that women never understood the kitchen better, than in that epoch of their greatest power. They understood it in its physiology, in its morality, and in its politics. The immortal *côtelettes à la Maintenon* of the queen-mistress of Louis XIV. were as much an expedient of the times, as her revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and her *dragées* and her *dragonnades* were alike directed to the service of her own unmeasured ambition. The best educated English women of the present day scarcely know the *materiel* of an *entrée*, or the elements which give its character to an *entremet;* or can tell when an *hors-d'œuvre* should come in, or a *pièce de resistance* should go out;* but this great stateswoman, this elegant writer, and best dresser of her age,—she who governed France, and influenced Europe,—was likewise capable of regulating the most modest *ménage*, with equal genius and equal attention to details.

There is on record a letter of Madame de Maintenon, which should be studied by all housekeepers, like their breviary. It is that, in which she lays out the expenditure of her thriftless brother's house and table, and tries to regulate the economy of her

* A fair friend of mine having inadvertently ordered her Irish footman to ring the bell in the middle of a first course, he replied, in the spirit of a superior *savoir faire*, "If I do, ma'am, sure the goose will come up!"

careless, slovenly sister-in-law's wardrobe, whom she reproaches with knowing as little of the science of the toilet as of that of the kitchen.* Such arts may be "the scoff of fools," but they will ever remain "the reverence of the wise;" for the woman who, under the pressure of necessity, can first dress a dinner, and then dress herself, to please the palate of the most fastidious, and the taste of the most precise, will be found adequate to every other exigency, in any combination, by which man (the creature of sense and appetite) may be saved, served, or gratified.

Women are nature's own cooks; and the power which man has usurped in the kitchen, as in the state, arose in a temporary necessity (a necessity now giving way to steam-kitchens and hot hearths) the demand for physical force. In all epochs of society, what man eats must mainly be determined by climates and races; but in all, the manner and fitness of his meal must depend on the intelligence and science which are brought to its preparation: and there it is, that the adroitness, the patience, and the keen senses† of the sex, are super-eminently applicable.

* "Si ce calcul," she concludes, "peut vous etre utile, je n'aurais, pas de regret à la peine que j'ai prise de le faire; et du moins je vous aurai fait voir que je sais quelque chose *du menage.*"—LETTRES DE MADAME DE MAINTENON, v. i.

† "The pleasant savoury smell
So quicken'd appetite, that I methought
Could not but taste it."—PARADISE LOST.

The children of the spicy East and dew-dropping South are provided by nature with delicate appetites, and with all the stimulating condiments necessary to a fastidious gastronomy. The northern tribes, voracious and indiscriminate in the urgency of their brute appetites, fall foul of whatever first substantially presents itself to their cravings. To the stomach of an ostrich, the tender and too-easily digestible fibre is no joke; and to the shivering little animals of the Pole, who feed the lamp of life as other lamps are fed, imbibing heat and nourishment from the same source, a dead seal is worth a covey of partridges; and the rank savour of raw fish dried in the wind is more gratifying, than the most delicate *fumet* of the best preserved venison. But, amidst these coarser outlines of nature's adaptations, there are still concealed shadings and softenings of tone; and when circumstance and civilization commenced their triumphs over the sterner necessities, woman, with her sensitive organization, must have been the first to discover culinary improvements, and reduce them to practice.

The women, indeed, must have early found that the animal susceptibility to civilization (that is to domestication and taming) lies in the stomach; and that those species alone are capable of the process, whose will is eminently obedient to their appetites. The inference from the animal to the human stomach could not have been lost on female penetration; and its application to the purposes of influence was probably among the first uses of the dis-

covery of Prometheus. From that day to this, the most stubborn and rebellious characters have been remarkable for their indifference to the art of eating; and, from Esau's mess of pottage, to Andrew Marvel's shoulder of mutton, the connexion between spare diet and dogged obstinacy has remained unshaken.

The earliest cookery on record will be found in the history of the Hebrews; and it is there stated that the collation set before the angelic visitants of Abraham was prepared by Sarah;—a proof of the superior science of the future mother of nations. That the patriarchal women presided over the confection of bread may be inferred from the form it received, which was long and tapering, such as is still called "lady's fingers." The Jews, therefore, broke their bread, having no necessity for cutting it; and their bread was so eminently good, that it was adopted as a general expression for viands of all descriptions. The Hebrew *Cordons bleus* also excelled in confectionary. So early as the mission of Moses, offerings of confectionary were ordained by the law; and cakes of honey, flour, and oil, evince the ingenuity and *savoir vivre* of the fair descendants of Sarah.

That gastronomy was not neglected among the Egyptian sciences, we have proofs in the picture histories of the country, so lately brought into evidence; and though the hardships incidental to a sojourn in the desert must have interfered with the lore derived by the Hebrew women from that

quarter, there can be little doubt that such resources as circumstances left at their disposition, were rendered more fully available, through the culinary ability which was brought to their preparation.

The refreshments offered to David by that profound intriguante, but excellent housewife, Abigail, though of a pastoral character, contained the elements of the choicest cookery—barley, beans, lentils, peas, dried figs, and grapes, butter, (or cream) honey, oil, and succulent veal; but how were these ingredients combined, and how served? Had Abigail retained a tradition, or had she, in her philosophy, reconquered a knowledge of the universality and immense capabilities of her veal? Did she subdue the conqueror of Goliah with an *oreille de veau à la Tartare?* or mollify him with a *crême à la moelle,*—the head and front of modern *laitage;* but also within the reach of the most rustic dairy? The solution of this question would involve the profoundest calculation of conflicting elements. A nation which wanted metals for arming its warriors, could hardly have possessed a respectable *batterie de cuisine;* but then the traditions of the table are amongst those most faithfully preserved; and woman, under the pressure of adverse circumstances, manifests such wonderful resources!

The Jews, however, were an obstinate race; and, where prejudice interfered, hardened their stomachs, no less than their hearts, against "the

goods the gods provided them." Thus, to the last, they remained insensible to the merits of the pig, that *animal encyclopédique*,—and were but little touched by the gastronomic capabilities of fish. In like manner, the Egyptians abjured mutton; (they had probably no south-downs; for Wales, and its delicious breed of sheep, were as yet undiscovered) —and they held beans in Pythagorean horror.

Not, however, that such self-denial is always to be placed to the account of prejudice. St. Clement of Alexandria tells us that natural reasons may, in many instances, be given for it. The abstinences imposed by law or religion, he says, have generally originated in some wholesome, or prudential consideration.

Thus Moses, Mahomet, and Father Matthew are in the same category; for the swine, the wine, and the whiskey inhibited by each on religious grounds, were alike injurious to the health, or to the morality of the parties, to whom they were forbidden. It is always easier to fanatise, than reason man into virtue.

Whatever progress was made in the culinary code of the Hebrews, women appear to have taken the initiative. The spices, gums, and essences introduced by Queen Sheba into the kitchens of Jerusalem, were valuable innovations; and the syrup of Guimauve of modern times is said to be made after one of the receipts furnished to "les offices" of Solomon, by that great woman. Cleopatra, that first-rate *petite maîtresse* and efficient stateswoman, was not ignorant of the resources which the kitchen

offers to ambition and to coquetry, to politics or passion. The exquisite luxury of her banquets was among the instruments by which she reigned over the hearts of her lovers, and subdued the enemies of her country. The suppers she gave to Cæsar obtained for her the honours of a Roman Empress; and Anthony's love of fish and of fishing was made instrumental to her deep political purposes. In spite of the religious prejudices of her subjects, she accompanied him in his piscatory excursions; and, her frolicksome habits taken into consideration, she may have assisted in dressing the salmon she had helped to catch.

Among the means by which Agrippina subjugated the Emperor Claudius, her receipt for dressing mushrooms was not the least important. Claudius loved this dish, "not wisely, but too well;" and died,—not because the fungus was poisoned, but—because he was a glutton. The close alliance between the edible and the poisonous species of this genus is a sharp lesson given by nature to the gluttonous appetite; but its daily admonitions have been very uniformly set at nought; and we have abundant classic authority for supposing that Claudius's case was by no means a rare one among the Romans.

The masters of the world, however, were not master-cooks; and the now popular *entremet* of the *champignon à la crême* was a delicacy little dreamed of in their philosophy.* That delicious dish is now

* As a general rule, house mushrooms are always the best and safest.

de rigueur, in the second course of the spring and autumn *menu* of all civilized tables; and the woman who is ignorant of the *poco meno* and *poco piu* of its constituent elements, (so essential to the digestion and health of her husband and his guests,) is unworthy, not only of an imperial throne, but to sit at the head of any board, more dignified than the cod's-head and shoulder table of a Bow-bell amphitryon. Such a woman is fit for nothing but the perpetration of a "toad in the hole," or a participation in the mysteries of the apple-dumpling, which, if they "perplexed a monarch,"* are intelligible to the meanest capacities of kitchen-maids and servants of all work.

With the Roman empire fell, in Europe, the great but unscientific kitchen of antiquity. The secrets of Vitellius were lost, the prize dishes of the Aventine fell from the memory of man, and the leaves of the imperial "Almanac des gourmands," like those of the sibyl, were scattered to the winds; one solitary volume only finding its way to posterity, and that one rescued from oblivion by a physician of the 18th century.† Long, however,

* See—not Milton, but—Peter Pindar.

† There were three persons who bore the name of Apicius, all celebrated for their culinary science. Cælius Apicius, who lived in the reign of Tiberius, wrote a work on Roman cookery, of which an edition was printed in the year 1705 by Doctor Martin Lister, physician to Queen Anne; undertaken probably in deference to the well-known tastes of his royal patient.

before the final extinction of the Roman power, gastronomy shared the fate of the other sciences, and faded by degrees, with the fading genius and virtue of the people. The learning of the Romans was, indeed, all second-hand—borrowed from the more civilized countries, which their ferocious valour overthrew: and their start from savagery to refinement, in the table as in their other tastes, is more marked by caprice and expense, than by a true sense of the beautiful or the sublime. The culinary precision of Geta, who placed his dishes alphabetically, was not learning, but pedantry; and though the secretary of Heliogabalus passed his life in writing out receipts and bills of farè, art owed little or nothing to that extravagant despot, with whom *il n'était de sauce, que la cherté.* His *patés de crête de coq*, and his *têtes de papayeux*, prove that to be an Emperor, is not enough to constitute a good cook. The plain good woman's dish,—the *alouettes en salmi, à la bonne bourgeoise* —would leave all the inventions of the imperial gastronome at an immeasurable distance.

The irruption of the barbarians extinguished the last lingering lights of the kitchen (such as they were) with all other lights; and their intellectual couvre-feu operated on the fires of the hot hearth, as on those of poetic and of scientific inspiration. The northern races, "hungry as the sea, could devour as much;" and quantity, with them, was a far more important consideration than quality. Antiquarian lore has dived laboriously into

the culinary arrangements of those days; but, to appreciate the barbarian kitchens of the fifth century, it is enough to have tasted the national cookery of the same races in the nineteenth: sour crout, pickled herrings, and lusciously sweet puddings, followed by the final leg of mutton, *obligato*, are still the staple of a German dinner; and "even unto this day," the national dinners of the Saxon heptarchy may be traced in a genuine English bill of fare of their descendants.

There may be some excuse for northern ignorance on this point, in "the divinity which hedged in" their women, and which deemed it sacrilege to devote them to any coarse employment. The north men would have blushed to turn their noble wives into turnspits; so the men took the cookery to themselves, and a pretty mess they made of it. The crude fibre of an old ox satisfied the tastes of the rude worshippers of Odin; and the heroes of Thor, like those of Homer, disdained not to prepare it with their own hands. The women, indeed, were consulted as oracles; but it was on all subjects, save that which concerned the daily interests and comforts of the community.

Charlemagne, to whom no source of social civilization was wholly unknown, was the first of his race to turn cookery to political purposes; and to act upon that maxim, so extensively amplified by one of the last of his descendants, that *la majesté du trône est dans la cuisine.* He first taught his peers to eat like gentlemen; and raised the culi-

nary profession to a state dignity, by instituting a domestic order, still found in European courts,—*les officiers de la bouche.* He made sovereign princes his waiters "for the nonce;" he put Paladins into his pantries, and Bishops over his butteries; and set the democratic example of degrading the privileged classes, by reducing them to menial servitude, and turning their "mean ambition" to the "pride of kings"—the *valetaille* of Louis XIV. was the highest development of the schemes of Charlemagne.*

To the festivities of this monarch, the women were recalled; and something of their taste and ingenuity became soon visible in the Imperial table. Pheasants were served at *Aix la Chapelle* with gilt spurs; and peacocks were dished with their gorgeous tails in full fan. The service, says a chronicler, was attended, *par des jeunes petits pages, chamarrés d'or, et par de gentes pucelles.*

Admitted to the table, the women were soon

* At the coronation dinners of the Emperors of Germany at Aix-la-Chapelle and Frankfort, the Imperial table was directed by the Nine Electors—the modern Kings of Europe —the Marquis of Brandebourg, "comme grande chambellain, porte un bassin d'arjent avec aiguières et des serviettes parfumées; il donna l'eau sur les mains de l'Empereur. Le Palatin du Rhin, portant quatre plats d'argent remplis de viandes, les posa devant l'Empereur; puis le Roi de Bohème portant un tasse rempli de vin, presenta à boire à l'Empereur." After the feast was over, these illustrious valets were left to scramble for the plunder of the table.—"*Creation de la Dignité Imperiale, par Claude d'Albois.*"

found necessary to the government of the kitchen; and females of the highest rank (*les plus titrées*) occupied themselves with the interior of their households, in preparing aliment for their families, and for stranger guests. Amidst the barbaric pomp of their knightly husbands, some touches of refinement were thus introduced to vary the homeliness of their ancient fare. Under the deviceful imagination of the sex, eels appeared with the darts of serpents and the eyes of basilisks; and dwarfs jumped out of pasties, with *aultres joyeusitées pareilles*; which, absurd as they may now appear, were then well fitted to set the table in a roar.

Scarcely had the merchants of Venice re-introduced the spices into Europe, when the women introduced them into their domestic cookery; and when the perfumes of Araby the blest breathed their odours over the ill-scented chambers of royalty, they were transported to the kitchen, till even the fish was *quelquefois cuit à l'eau rose.*

But the Church also took a considerable part in culinary reform, and joined the women in forwarding the social entertainments of their flocks. The great abbeys were schools of gastronomy; the learning of the Benedictines was applied to the refectory; and many lady abbesses, canonized for their fasts and vigils, better deserved a place in the album sanctorum for their confectionary and their compounds. Monasteries were indeed the asylums of culinary, as of all other learning; and to this day "*latin de cuisine*" is applied to express

what in English is called dog latin—as intimating the imperfect latinity of those friars, who, in their devotion to gastronomic studies, had necessarily become less perfect proficients in their humanities, than their brethren, who knew no other proof of the pudding than the eating.

But, in spite of the priests and of the women, the progress of the art was slow and vacillating. Though the *potages* must have been of early date in monasteries and in hospitals, soup, in its modern acceptation, was perhaps first historically noticed in the commencement of the fifteenth century. The charming chronicler, Monstrelet, describing the festivities on the marriage of Catherine de Valois with our Henry the Fifth, mentions that the Archbishop of Sens, at the head of a procession of the clergy of his diocese, served up the soup and wine to the bridal chamber of the royal pair.

About the same epoch, accident favoured *les droits de la bouche*, in France, by raising its ministers to a high position. During the insanity of Charles the Sixth, the Comte de St. Paul raised a militia in Paris of five hundred *garçons bouchers*, commanded by their own officers, the master proprietors of *la boucherie*. This corps, having fought well at the battle of Azincourt, retained their military grades and plunder; and from these knights of the marrowbones and cleaver, descended some of the noble houses of France — the illustrious families of Saint-Yon, Thibeaut, "*et autres*," says

the chronicler, owe their origin to *la grande boucherie de Paris* of the fifteenth century.

If the servants of the abattoirs of Paris were thus mounting the baronial coronet, an English Queen (but a French woman) raised her cook to the rank of an English gentleman. Eleanor de Provence, the consort of Henry the Third of England, struck by the superior art of *Richard de Norreys*, her sergeant cook, induced the king to grant him the manor of Ockholt, or Ockwell, in Berkshire. From this eminent artist, so generously appreciated by his royal mistress, descended a family, which, in the days of Elizabeth, ranked high in the state; and represented that class—their country's boast and pride—the gentry of England, under its most respected phasis..

About one mile from the ancient town of Bray, immortalized in story by its versatile, yet ever-consistent vicar, still rises for the delight of the antiquary and the triumph of the gastronome, one of the most perfect and interesting specimens extant, of the old English manor houses of the middle ages: it was erected by John de Norreys, the direct descendant of Richard, the queen's cook. John de Norreys bequeathed, by will, a large sum for the completion of this mansion; or, as he expresses it, for the "full building and making uppe of the said chappel, with the chambers adjoining, within my manor of Ocholt, in the parish of Bray, not yet finished." Of the portions of this manor-house still existing, its gables, porches, and beau-

tiful windows of six bays, the most remarkable feature is the quartering of the arms of the historical cook with the armorial bearings of the proudest peers of England. Here, among the antelopes of Henry the Sixth, the eagles of Margaret d'Anjou, the crests of the Beauforts, and the lambriquins of the Beauchamps, are still to be seen the beaver of Richard de Norreys, with the appropriate motto of "faithfully serve," borrowed from the calling of the founder of the family.

The wars of the Roses were unfavourable to the arts; and the English kitchen retrograded with the rest. The "household bokes," so carefully kept by the Lancasters, were lost or destroyed; though that of the old Countess of Hereford* is still extant; and the sensual but thriftless Yorks, as careless of their domestic details, as of those of the state, left few lights behind them to guide the researches of posterity. Still, Edward the Fourth, all voluptuary as he might be, was a cautious one; and sinning by rule, he escaped the penalty of excess. "The docteur of physique stondeth much in the king's presence at his meles, counselling or answering to the king's grace, which diet is best according; and to tell the nature and operation of all metes. And much he should talke with the steward, chamerlayn, asserver, and the maister cook, to devise, by counsayle, what metes and drinks is best according with the king."†

* The grandmother of the immortal Henry the Fifth.

† In the Liber Niger, or household-book of Edward IV.

The elevation of the Tudors, accompanied, as it probably was, by the introduction of Welsh mutton, formed an epoch in the science; and, while it served the parsimonious habits of the seventh Henry, it may have afforded a not-neglected hint to his luxurious successor. But it was the feasts of the field of gold that gave a more decided impulse to culinary progress in England, by the many and vast improvements, then and there borrowed from the cooks of more civilized France, which, even before the time of Louis the Eleventh, had preceded all the northern states in gastronomy. It was one of the Preux of that nation, who introduced the shalot from the plains of Ascalon; and *La belle chatelaine la dame de ses pensées* first employed it in the ragouts of her table. Parsley was brought from Italy, with the first rudiments of that *Opera Buffa*, which still bears, in Paris, its original name; while the *saucisseuses* of the fifteenth century gave a promise of fame and fortune, from their manipulation of pork, which the *charcutiers* of the seventeeth are well known to have realised.

But the epoch of *la renaissance* (a term which has shed round Francis the First a glory denied him on the plains of Pavia) founded a professional chair for cookery, which has never since been vacated, in all the revolutions of French fortunes. Francis the First again, for the third time, brought back the women to the court, whence the ferocious Louis the Eleventh had banished them. His Italian daughter-in-law, Catherine de Medicis, being placed

at the head of the royal household, brought to her lofty position all the lights and science of the Italian "office," then the first in the world. Confectionary, the poetry of the kitchen, was at its acme; and *les patisseurs de la Dauphine* shed a glory on the whole order, by the ingenuity they displayed in their architectural and allegorical structures. They were soon incorporated into a company; and, in the reign of Charles the Ninth, the son of this foundress of *l'art sucré*, they received a statute, "*où l'on remarque le privilège de fabriquer la pain à chanter messe.*"

The French cookery displayed in the field of gold made an obvious impression upon Wolsey, the greatest man, and most liberal Amphitryon of his age; to whom his brute king was not worthy to be a scullion. He saw, at once, the advantage of a reform in the rude English kitchen; and the "Butcher's cur," the "honeste poore man's sonne," who, from the heights of his own great mind, must have looked down on the ferocious descendant of Owen Tudor, soon introduced the elegancies of the French table among the other civilizing influences of learning and art. In his Palace of Hampton, the Cardinal Minister may be said to have established a college of gastronomy, of which the halls and offices still standing give the best idea. They are the last subsisting monument in the country of priestly magnificence, and of the household arrangements of churchmen, at the time when they accumulated in the hands of the same individual, the highest offices of the church and the state.

Among the thousand domestics who crowded the vastness of Hampton Court, many were noble peers, knightly gentlemen, and gallant squires,

"The liv'ryed army and the menial lords."

One domestic official there was, who strutted in pre-eminent importance through its halls, in doublet and cloak of crimson velvet, rich gold chain, and feathered cap, to whom men took off their bonnets as he passed, reverently observing, "There goes my lord cardinal's master cook." This personage held under his rule two first and six under cooks, a yeoman and groom of the larder, a yeoman and two grooms of the scullery, two yeomen and two grooms of the buttery, three yeomen and three pages in the cellary, two yeomen in the chandry, two yeomen and two grooms of the ewery, and two yeomen in the wafery.*

To the sumptuous banquets prepared by this Vatel of the mighty and munificent churchman, the fairest ladies of England † were invited; and they studied under his lessons the dishes and devices,

* See an agreeable little volume by C. Jesse, Esq., Surveyor of Her Majesty's Parks and Palaces, entitled, "A Summer's Day at Hampton Court."

The recent regulations, by which the public is freely admitted to view the curious and interesting interior of that royal palace, without "let or hindrance," or paying for their tickets at the door, does great honour to the present Administration.

When will the reverend proprietors of Westminster Abbey take the hint?

† "This night he makes a supper, and a great one,
To many lords and ladies: there will be
The beauty of this kingdom."

which, passing from Italy to France, afforded them opportunities for improving their own culinary science—a science, which no great lady then neglected. What model sweetmeats must have been carried away! what subjects of domestic discussion for the tapestry chambers and oriel windows of the country mansions, to which the delighted guests returned from these more than royal festivals!

The culinary traditions of Hampton Court were long preserved in the neighbouring palace of Sheen. The nutritive and delicious *crême à la frangipane* (borrowed from the receipts of Catherine de Medicis) suggested, to one of the courtly maids of honour of the dying Queen Elizabeth, that mysterious delicacy suited to her declining appetite and wasted health, which has reached posterity, under the name (marking the station of its ingenious inventor) of "the Maid of Honour."

For more than two centuries, successive generations have offered their annual homage at the shrine of this noble *cordon bleu*, of the wafery of Richmond. The patron saint of hungry children, and of child-cramming mothers, still shares the triumphs of that exquisite spot, "which nature's choicest gifts adorn."

While the haggis, cocky-leeky, and Scotch broth*

* "I have consulted," says Doctor Hunter, "Homer, Aristophanes, Aristotle, Athenæus, &c. &c. &c., in order to obtain some knowledge of the Grecian cookery, but have not been able to collect anything worthy of notice, beyond the *black broth* of Lacedæmon, which probably was the same as *sheep's-head* broth, well known in our sister kingdom."—*Culina Famulatrix Medicinæ.*

introduced from Holyrood House into Whitehall, by James the First, threw back English cookery to its brute elements, France steadily pursued the golden career, which had opened to her kitchen at the *renaissance*, by the genius of her Italian Queen, and by the quick apprehensions of her *spirituel* women.

From that epoch, says a learned and elegant writer on the subject, "*étant bien certain que les dames Françaises se sont toujours plus ou moins mélées de ce qui se faisait dans leurs cuisines, on doit en conclure que c'est à leur intervention, qu'est due la prééminence indisputable qu'a toujours eue en Europe la cuisine Française, et qu'elle a principalement acquise, par une quantité immense de preparations recherchées, légères, et friandes, dont les femmes seules ont pu concevoir l'idée.*"

Under these happy auspices, the gorgeous *siècle de Louis XIV.* began; and the gastronomic science, obeying the impulse of progression common to the period, the kitchen took its place beside the altar and the throne. Sumptuous banquets and royal fêtes were not, however, the *pierres de touche* of the highest effort of art of the times. It was for the *petit couvert* of retired royalty, it was for the *soupers fins* of the elegant and the tasteful, that the artist brought forward his best skill, and was emulous of rival superiority. Madame de Sevigné's *poulard* and *plat de legumes* (enjoyed with the Rochefoucaulds, and the La Fayettes, in her Hotel de Carnavalet,) were as exquisitely dressed, as the most complicated dishes of the *grand couvert* of Versailles.

The declining years of Louis the Fourteenth brought with them a decline of appetite and of taste; and he was so subject to weaknesses of the stomach, that a species of cordial was invented for his use by Madame de Maintenon, consisting of distilled spirits, sugar, orange flowers, and other perfumes. This was the origin of the various modern compounds known by the general name of liqueurs—the "*chasse*,"—without which there is no chance of digestion for the high-born and wealthy of our own times. The success of this invention originated a school of valetudinarian cooks, of which Madame de Maintenon was the foundress. Her famous *côtelettes en papillotes*, which protected the stomach against grease, and Louis le Grand from indigestion, spared him from many a fit of bile and penitence, and increased the influence of the favourite, to the despair of Louvois, and of the princesses, and to the triumph of Père la Chaise and the Jesuits.

The charming and very *espiègle* Princesse de Conti had almost exhausted her art in the attempt to save her husband and brother-in-law from the King's resentment, and from that punishment which their vices were drawing on them, when she suddenly thought of attacking the royal mercy through the royal stomach; and invented the famous dish, still so popular in France, under the style and title of *Carrée de mouton à la Conti.** This was a dish in

* The language of cookery is French, as that of medicine is Latin. I will not presume, therefore, to spoil the Princess's receipt by translating it. "Appropriez un carré de

which the coarser fat and fibre disappear, under the flavour of the natural juices, and of *bouquets de fines herbes*, mushrooms, and anchovies. The whole was so digested in the casserol, that it left nothing for the royal organs to perform, save to enjoy.

The old king threw aside his insipid *potage à la vierge* (a palling *purée* of chicken, veal, cream, and eggs) and fell upon his piquant carré with the appetite of former times, when his *en cas de nuit* (a cold fowl) was left at his bed-side, lest he should awake hungry. The court was amazed at his lenity to the crimes of the Conti and Bourbon; and Madame de Maintenon becoming alarmed, called the Père la Chaise to her aid. The result of this consultation was the "*Canard au Père Douillet*" which then first took its place at the royal table; and the king's conscience was awakened by it to a new sense of —orthodox cookery. Thenceforth, every new dish came labelled with a saintly name; and the many excellent *morceaux à la Ste. Ménéhould* date from the reign of the Saint Françoise de Maintenon.

mouton, en levant les peaux qui se trouvent sur le filet; prenez un quarteron de petit lard bien entrelardé, anchois lavés; coupez les en lardons, et les maniez avec un peu de gros poivre, deux echalottes, persil, siboulé une feuille de laurier, quatre de basalic, feuilles d'astragon, tous hachées en poudre; lardez tout le filet avec le lard et les anchois; mettez le carré dans une casserole; mouillez avec un verre de vin blanc, autant de bouillon; degraissez la sauce, et mettez gros comme un noix de beurre, maniée avec un pince de farine; faites lier la sauce sur le feu, et le servez sur le carré"—"and was not *that* a dainty dish to lay before a king."

If the science remained stationary during the last unfortunate days of Louis the Fourteenth, it took a rapid stride under the Regency, when some of the greatest ladies of the day lent their names to dishes of their invention or adoption. *Piquées, d'une finesse extrême,* were ascribed to the Duchesse de Berri; and the *Dinde truffé* was brought into vogue by the pretty wife of a Fermier-General, * to the consummation of high cookery and the injury of weak digestions.

The reign of Louis the Fifteenth, with its long peace, was favourable to female influence in the cabinet and in the kitchen; and the order and regularity in which a modern table is served in the palaces of royalty, and the mansions of the great, date from that epoch.

The petits soupers of Marli surpassed in elegance and refinement its "*grands collations*" in the last days of Louis Quatorze. The great ladies of the court purchased the inventions of dishes from some obscure cook of genius; and edited Matelottes and Salmis, as great English ladies now edit or appropriate works of far less taste and science.

The Princesse de Soubise lent her historical name to that excellent dish, which first brought the *purée d'oignon* into fashion; and proved that the

* The first turkey was brought into France in 1570, and was served at the table of Catherine de Medicis, at the marriage supper of her son, Charles the Ninth.—*See Almanack des Comestibles,* 1776.

greatest vegetable condiment of the kitchen might be deprived by art of all that was offensive in its odour, without losing the piquant acidity of its flavour.

The success of the *Côtelette à la Soubise*, and the rising favour of its inventress, alarmed the ambitious jealousy of the celebrated Duchesse de Mailly. She saw something behind the cutlet greater than the cutlet; and, recalling the old spirit of political intrigue of the Soubise women in the former reign, which had so long agitated all Europe, she resolved to meet the princess on her own ground; and she gave to the royal menus and to the world her immortal *gigot à la Mailly!!*

In the reign of Louis the Sixteenth, the alimentary philosophy had reached the very acme of its perfectibility! Cookery assumed all the dignity of a science, and stood half-way between physic and chemistry. The most distinguished *savans* * did not think it beneath their consequence to occupy themselves with its processes; and they everywhere introduced improvements, from the simple *pot au feu* of the poor mechanic, up to the elaborate combinations which are served in dishes of crystal and vases of gold. †

The language of the kitchen then became as

* No man can be a good physician who has not a competent knowledge of cookery; and in this I am supported by every eminent physician from Hippocrates to Sydenham.—Dr. Hunter, *Culina Famulatrix Medicinæ*.

† The wholesome pot au feu of the lower orders in France might be introduced with incalculable benefit among the

polished as that of *les belles lettres:* cookery-books and "almanacs" were composed with the wit of Voltaire and the graces of Sevigné. Receipts for purées were written with the purisms of the academy; *petits plats* were named "epigrams;" and the very genius of pastoral poesy reigned over the technicalities of the second course and the dessert. Women of all classes now aspired to mingle (in the most material sense of the words) the *utile dulci;* and, while great ladies exercised themselves in drawing out elaborate bills of fare, with a unity of design that would have well become an epic poem, those of humbler houses, where no chef was kept, rivalled the master-spirits of the times by their inventions, and gave their names to some of the best dishes of the age. "La Cuisine Bourgeoise" was published in the latter part of the reign of Louis the Sixteenth; and it required all the wit of La Reynière to make head against one of the best cookery-books ever published for the edification of posterity.

The pretensions of the sex to meddle with an art, for which, it was said, "nature had never intended them," produced, however, a violent opposition on the part of their masters; and Madame de Genlis, having boasted that she had taught a German Count at Vienna to dress seven delicious French dishes, in return for his hospitality, she

same classes in England; "for, after all, the stomach is the chief organ of the human system; and upon its state the powers and feelings of each individual mainly depend."

drew down upon her presumption the sarcasms of the côterie de Holbach. It was accordingly predicted that the cuisinières of Paris would soon usurp the chairs of the chefs; the *precieuses* of the pantry were subjected to general ridicule; and

> Toute Française, à ce que j'imagine
> Sait, bien ou mal, faire une cuisine,

was an epigram borrowed from a fashionable comedy of the day, and in every body's mouth.

But the women persevered; and the order of the Cordon Bleu was founded, which passed through the storms of the revolution, of the restoration, and *les trois jours*, still flourishing in France, when all other orders have been trampled under foot.

England, meantime, made so little progress in the culinary art, that the household which could not afford to import a French cook remained where the wisdom of its ancestors had left it in 1688. Queen Anne, however, though a dull woman and a weak sovereign, was a divine-righted cook. The kitchen, not the cabinet, was her vocation. There, indeed, she admitted no rival near the throne; there no Duchess of Marlborough ruled her counsels, no Mrs. Masham undermined them. There she found her own level; and all who are acquainted with the culinary literature of the day, or who possess a cookery-book published by Tonson or by Curl, will find that by far the best receipts, in their prescriptions for indigestion, are those headed with, "after Queen Anne's fashion." "*La Reine Anne étoit très gourmand, et ne dédaignait pas à s'entretenir*

avec son cuisinier," says a French historian of the kitchen; and, it is curious to add, that Lord Bolingbroke, with whom her majesty secretly worked for the overthrow of the Whigs, and the restoration of the Pretender, was married to the favourite niece of the great inventress of the *côtelettes à la Maintenon.*

The accession of the House of Hanover did little for cookery. The Fatimas of the seraglios of the two first George's, good fussy Frows, *bourrées* with their German kitchen, were little calculated to improve the taste of the nation in any respect; and the fine gentlemen, the travelled men of the day, the Chesterfields, the Walpoles, and the Montagues, preached the pre-eminence of France in all matters of social enjoyment—from the kitchen to the boudoir, from a toilet to a *tourte.* At their dictation, it soon became an admitted axiom that, to procure a good dinner in England, it was necessary to procure a good cook from France—that the most paltry second-rate *gargotier* of a Parisian restaurant was preferable to the best cook, male or female, bred in the English kitchen.

This universal preference of the foreigner preserved and increased the deficiencies in which it arose. English cookery, if in any respect it remained stationary, derived the advantage from the fact that it could scarcely retrograde: till, finally, the wars of the French Revolution, by cutting off all communication with the Continent, caused the memory to fade even of the material elements of *gusto,* in the land, where, though there were twenty reli-

gions, there was but one sauce,* and that one—melted butter ! ! ! *Fines herbes* were no longer known in the English garden ; gravies were made with water, *entrées* were cooked on blazing fires, and black pepper and allspice were the sovereign condiments. Salads were dressed with cream and hard eggs, and soups (reserved for great occasions) were flavoured with ketchup, and seasoned with Cayenne. Mrs. Glass's volume of hashes and hodgepodges became the church and state manual of orthodox cookery ; and was not to be superseded, even by Kitchener's once popular kitchen-stuff ; so that the actor, Quin's, sarcastic summary of a particular dinner, might have been adopted as a universal definition of all ordinary feasting—"The soup was cold, the ice hot, and everything sour in the house, but the vinegar."

Such was the state of things, when the fall of Napoleon gave peace to Europe. The royal Amphitryon of England had, indeed, possessed great views for the elevation of the national kitchen ; but he wanted the supplies. He had imported the immortal Careme, and had implored his assistance in the revival of the art, as Louis the Sixteenth had called on Necker to restore the ruined finances of France. Careme came !—he came, he saw ; but

* The saucy Neapolitan who made this remark of "our own, our native land," would have shown more philosophy, had he been shocked at the characteristic of his own country, which, though it could boast of twenty sauces, had but one religion.

he could not conquer. The ponderous batterie of Brighton (that Woolwich of the kitchen) shone out, in its vast armament of polished coppers, in vain! Troops of chuckle-headed little English aides, plump and platter-faced, as the *Cupidons bouffis* of the days of Louis the Fourteenth, were no aids to him; and hecatombs of constitutional English beef, and oceans of passive obedient fish, which came to be caught within view of the kiosks of the Pavilion, invoked the genius of the enlightened foreigner to no purpose. To use his own expression, he was "*souffoqué.*"

Careme could not but perceive at a glance that he had a school, not to reform, but to create. There were no abuses, because there were no uses. He looked out at the Smithfield fires of the royal elaboratory; and he thought of the *petits feux* and *petits fours* of France! He listened, and discovered that there was no language capable of expressing the ideas which he would have communicated. He found that he had a vocabulary to invent, a grammar to compose; and he shrank from the herculean labour imposed upon him.

But, above all, he discovered that the women of England knew nothing of his art; that the presiding deities of the Pavilion scarcely rose above Cowslip's appreciation of a roasted duck, with its coarse and predominating accompaniment of sage and onion. He heard, no doubt, with horror and dismay, that the culminating point of political cookery and coquetry of the great *dame du palais*

of the Regency, was a plain peppered cutlet (*anglice* a mutton-chop) which the English Louis the Fourteenth went daily in his plain chariot to lunch upon—*tout son saoul!*

Careme, "*dont l'honneur fut dans ses fournaux*," sent in his resignation; and his answer to the inquiries of French friends why he had left so distinguished a service, is well known: *C'est que la cuisine de son altesse Royale, est trop bourgeoise.*

The opening of the continent brought the nobility and the gentry of the British empire in multitudes, unequalled since the Crusades, to the great metropolis of gustatory excellence; and when they returned from the altars of Very to their own domestic hearths, they were as unable to relish the legitimate kitchen, as they were to sit out the legitimate drama of their native country. To the noble and the wealthy, foreign cooks, as usual, were easily attainable, at a cost triple the income they gave to the learned members of the Universities, who educated their sons, and at six times the reward they bestowed on the accomplished women who brought up their daughters. But the mass of travellers who had equally acquired all the elegant tastes of foreign refinement, could not afford to entertain a chef and his legions of subaltern bonnet-blancs; and were thus thrown beyond the lines of continental cookery.

The social want of the times, however, brought its remedy along with it; and the reaction was astounding. Then it was that the clubs arose, houses

of refuge to destitute celibacy, chapels of ease to discontented husbands. There, men could dine like gentlemen and christians, upon all the *friandises* of the French kitchen, much cheaper and far more wholesomely, than at their own tables, upon the tough half-sodden fibres of the national roast and boiled, or on the hazardous resources of calf's head hash, gravy soup, and marrow puddings. Moral England gave in. The English "home," that temple of the heart, that centre of all the virtues, was left to the solitary enjoyment of the English wives; and the whole husbandry of England migrated to those splendid *Duomos*, served by priests bred in the cells of *Les frères Robert*, or educated in the cloisters of the *Cancale*.

From that moment, Almack's lost its *prestige;* dowdies now "stept" in where angels feared to tread!—tickets, once sued for in vain by suppliant duchesses, were repelled by second-class dowagers for their daughters, in the motherly consideration, that

"Where none were beaux, 'twere base to be a belle:"

for younger brothers and ci-devant exquisites do *not* fill the ball-room, "as well as better men."

To your casserols, then, women of Britain. Would you, "with a falconer's voice," lure your faithless tassels back again, apply to the practical remedy of your wrongs, proceed to the reform of your domestic government, and turn your thoughts to that art, which, coming into action every day in the

year during the longest life, includes within its circles the whole philosophy of economy and order, the preservative of good health, and of the tone of good society, all peculiarly within your province! The greatest women of all ages—from a Sarah to a Sevigné—have not disdained its study and its practice. One quarter of the time which you now give to "nicknaming God's creatures" upon canvass, if devoted to the philosophy of your larders and your pantries, to the doctrines of a pure culinary literature, would furnish your husbands' tables with elegance and science, from which slovenly ignorance now drives them to other and better dinners. Open then forthwith seminaries, not merely for catechisms and spiritual metaphysics, so difficult to infant digestion, but for culinary instruction and physical amelioration, facile to the comprehension of all. Establish model schools, and found chairs for the dissemination of that eminently useful knowledge, the knowledge by which we may eat to live, with safety and satisfaction. Provide for the sufficient education of a convenient number of able-bodied young women, and for sending them forth as missionaries through the benighted provinces of the empire;—and when, through the philosophic researches of these female seminarists, maxims shall be attained to form a volume of reports, some female Bentham may yet arise to complete the good work, by an encyclopedic code, that will supersede for ever the false guides and erring prophets of the old English

kitchen ;* and prove that one exquisite little dinner, (the table round, the guests few) if dressed with science and illumined by wit, is worth all the great feasts and fastidious banquets, that ever were given, if considered as a means to the great end of bringing those together, whom God has joined, and *family dinners* have put asunder.

* Je ne regarderai point les sciences suffisamment representées, (said the President H—— de P—— to the celebrated La Place) tant que je ne verrai pas un cuisinier sieger à la première place, de l'institut.

A FIRST LESSON IN READING.

"Oh reader—if that thou can'st read."

"If that thou can'st read?" a strange question, that, for the nineteenth century, amidst tract and education societies of every faith and form. The doubt, however, it implies may be justified. True it is, we have schools of all calibres, Bell's schools, Lancasterian schools, infant schools, and schools "for grown gentlemen," Bible schools, with note and comment, and Bible schools without note and comment, Sunday schools, evening schools, &c. &c. Even polemics have become the handmaids of literature; if not for mutual instruction, for mutual annoyance,—for making the gospel of peace the medium for evolving all manner of sectarian hatreds and dissensions. But, all this notwithstanding, there is no going beyond statistical fact; and the Parliamentary commissioners have a field before them, of which in our patriotism we cannot think without a blush.

Our meaning, though, goes a little deeper, and

looks further into the national condition, than concerns mere primary instruction.

It is not every one who has overcome the difficulties of Dilworth and Lindley Murray, that needs not a literary go-cart; nor are all emancipated from the necessity for additional tuition, who might laugh at the poor Welch curate, of whom it is related, that, making no hand of the Hebrew names of the Old Testament, he told his parishioners that "hard name went unto hard place." The art of reading is by no means so mechanical a process.

Montaigne, who in many particulars got the start of the age in which he lived, has placed this matter in its proper light, and will, without further detail, explain the meaning of the enigma. "*J'ay leu,*" he says, "*en Tite Live cent choses que tel n'y a pas leu: Plutarque a leu cent, outre ce que j'y ai sceu lire; et à l'adventure, ce que l'auteur y a mis.*"

Scarcely any two people read the same book precisely alike; every one spelling and putting it together, after the measure of sense, which nature and art have stored his mind withal, as Whittington read the ringing of the church bells. Of this we need no further proof, than the various and contradictory meanings, which the several party reviews contrive to pick out of the same volume. There is many an S. T. P. who has gone half through his college library, without having mastered the contents of a single volume, not to

speak of the "*ce que l'auteur n'y a mis,*" which the man who knows how to read, would infallibly have discovered.

As for the mass of everyday readers, they run over the type, pretty much like the compositor, without even perceiving that it has a meaning; and there is scarcely one in a hundred of them ten paces in advance of a wight, of Cambridge celebrity, who, having diligently perused the entire volume of Euclid, declared that it was an amusing book enough, but that he could make nothing of the pictures; for so he called the diagrams.

It cannot, then, but be considered a wise ordination of Providence (all the ordinations of Providence are wise in man's presumptuous imagination, when they happen to chime in with his comforts, and jump with his interests) that men should in the course of nature buy books first, and set about reading them afterwards. What between the books which are above the average reading powers of the public, and those which are too easily understood, and speak unpleasant truths too plainly, by far the best and most serviceable volumes would remain unsold, if the order of things were inverted, and purchasers were not compelled to deal for a pig in a poke. Still worse would be the fate of that very numerous class of publications, which are positively without a meaning; "for true no meaning" puzzles more than the most abstruse sense. What, then, would become of the race of those who live by their pen? Nature, however, is kind; and bibliopoly has not wholly gone to the dogs.

The art of reading being thus imperfectly understood, and its knowledge thus narrowly diffused, it is no more than common charity in the bookseller to assist his customers in their difficulties; and this, probably, was the "moving why" that first tempted the trade to dabble so largely in reviews — a class of publications expressly adapted to the service of those who cannot read for themselves. A review is to the intellect what a pair of spectacles is to the eyes; and without its assistance, printing might as well be confined to the advertising of Macassar oil, or giving circulation to Burgess's fish sauce. Between the ignorance, the wilfulness, and the preoccupation of readers in general (the present company always excepted) a book may be thumbed till its pages are reduced to dog's ears, without the student becoming "any the wiser," if the way to the interior and mystic sense of the author be not macadamized, made straight in the desert, and cleared from verbiage, by the lucubrations of a professed critic.

There are many books of the greatest celebrity in literature, concerning whose readings the world is far from being generally agreed. There is, for example, Machiavelli's "Prince," which Œdipus himself could no more develop, than a spaniel can unroll a hedgehog. One half of mankind say, that it is a most nefarious manual of tyranny, a cold-blooded estimate of the ways and means of despotism; while the other half understand it as a lesson of tyrannicide, a jacobinical denunciation of

the cruel practices, by which social order is maintained in half the churches and states of Europe. Then, there is the "*Divina Commedia*" of Dante, which statesmen, scholars, and philosophers, have spelled, generation aftergeneration, from the hour when it was first written, without suspecting that it was a political satire, till Signor Rossetti flashed the truth upon them, in his learned and very ingenious commentary: a sure proof, that "*in diebus illis*" there was no Attorney-general, or Constitutional Society in Florence, to "teach the boys to read."

The ancients were much more modest than we are, in their estimate of their own powers of reading. Pliny tells us, that Appian, the grammarian, (in his despair, probably, of mastering the art by his own unassisted powers), applied to the devil to teach him to read, evoking spirits, and compelling them to aid him in his critical studies. It is probable, however, that having, by means of the father of lies, got at the truth, he was afraid of a state prosecution; for he kept "the ghost's word" scrupulously to himself.* If all that has been said of ancient authors be true, there is nothing so strange in this diffidence of Appian.

The works of Homer, we are told, contain all

* Plin. l. xxx., cap. 2. The text says, "seque evocasse umbras ad percontandum Homerum, quâ patriâ, quibusque parentibus genitus esset;" but this could not have been all, for he adds, "non tamen ausus profiteri quod sibi respondisse diceret."

the principles of all the sciences;"* and this throws some light upon Jacotot's child-killing dogma, that all things are implicitly contained in Telemachus, though that far-famed volume is indeed but a flat parody of the Odyssey, and Calypso, *qui ne peuvoit se consoler du depart d' Ulysse* was not half so *ennuyée* as the schoolboy condemned to wade through its insipidity.

Not, however, but there are cases in which the moderns are as much at fault as the darkest of the ancients. Is there any man sufficiently single-hearted, to believe that he can read all that is enveloped in the nothingness of a king's speech; or can comprehend the elaborate profundity of an harangue on the state of the nation? Who, unpossessed of second sight, would pretend to read (in the proper sense of the word) the thousand expositions of the Apocalypse, or the protocols of modern diplomacy?

This discovery of the difficulty of reading throws a light on the quotations, so frequently occurring in polemical works, which tell directly against the argument in hand. It cannot be presumed that such passages have been cited at second hand; first, because it would be uncharitable; and, secondly, because it would be unfair — *hanc veniam petimus, damusque vicissim.* On the other hand, people never argue, like Mrs Malaprop, against themselves, if they can help it. When, there-

* Blackwell's Life of Homer.

fore, so much only of a sentence or paragraph is taken, as may appear convenient, and the hostile clauses are omitted, we are not to set it down as bad faith, and to a foolish confidence that the reader's idleness will prevent his consulting the original, but loyally believe that the author has misread his authority.

There is not a more palpable mistake, than the imagining professional criticisms to be written with a view to enlighten the authors, whom they castigate. An author is the natural prey of a critic; and a reviewer cares no more for the whole race, than a fox does for a hen and chickens. Their vituperation has another motive, to instruct, namely, their subscribers how to read, and to lead them (by the nose) to those conclusions, to which, if left to themselves, they would never arrive. This is one of those "*vérités veritables*," of which Napoleon spoke, and of which there are so few in the world.

It is, moreover, the difficulty in reading, the inability of penetrating the mystery of things, and discovering on which side one's bread is buttered, that has thrown certain governments on the necessity of hiring, at such exorbitant prices, sense-keepers for the nation, over which they rule. The restored dynasty of France employed a countless host of Jesuits, both of the long and the short robe, as a literary *gens d'armerie*, for cutting down all passages above the level of public comprehension, (as if ideas were of no more value than sim-

ple citizens),—for extinguishing such "lights" as "lead astray,"—and for explaining to the people the manner in which they should read those few books which are not absolutely forbidden.

If in this art, we English are comparatively behindhand, it must be either for the want of a few Jesuits and censors, or because we are a nation of shopkeepers, and have no time for study. Ledgers must be posted; the main chance must be looked after; and we are glad to make use of ready-made interpreters, upon whose sagacity we may pin our faith, while we are paying an uninterrupted worship at the shrine of Mammon. Unluckily, these our teachers are never all in a story. If conspiracy comes, as an Irish barrister once asserted, from "*con*, to breathe, and *spiro*, together," they must be acquitted of the charge altogether. A consultation of lawyers or physicians could not *ex luce dare fumum*, more distinctly.

The people, therefore, unable to read for themselves, and deprived of instructors to give them any certain and fixed direction, are blown about by every wind of doctrine, and are the dupes of every one, who finds it worth his while to mystify them. They pore over the pages of a volume with great earnestness and zeal, and swallow the words straight on, without spelling or skipping; but when they come to "*finis*," they know no more of the essence of the subject, than Mrs. Shandy. Accordingly, they are constantly at fault, and lapse

into such signal errors, as are no where else to be met with among civilized communities.

In putting forth these opinions on scholarship, nothing is intended with reference to the great cause pending between the biblicals and the establishment. Let the expert decide whether religion be more degraded by the licence of the fifth monarchy-men and the modern Southcotians, or by the arrogant intolerance of the partizans of an infallible authority. One may have one's own leanings, no doubt, like other folks, and yet let the milkmaid kiss her cow, if "Heavy Ralph," the ploughman, or some other more acceptable biped, be not at hand to attract her preference. If there be those who think that they can read, and not only read, but "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" the dark words of the book of the law, without note and comment, they have free permission to indulge in the conceit;—provided they do not make a precedent of the case, and, pretending to more knowledge than they possess in lay literature, set up for teachers themselves. In other words, they are welcome to take the "primrose path" to the other world, if they please; but let them not knock down the funds, blow up the orthodox, and turn Noodledum out of windows.

So, too, of their opponents, if they insist upon it, that the essence of the law is too refined for ordinary intuition, they have full leave to "compile and compile" for its illustration, provided they will let others do the same, and not insist on cramming

their own expositions down the throats of the unwilling, as exclusively trustworthy.

Having disposed of that very ticklish subject, modern polemics, the law of the case requires, also, a paragraph, in order to satisfy the world that there is nothing in it hostile to the fundamental and sapient maxim of British jurisprudence, "*Ignorantia legis non excusat.*" This maxim is no authority for any presumed facility in the art of reading, because the longest life would not suffice for the mere manual operation of perusing the statutes, while not even the most learned of the profession pretend to have thoroughly read them in our sense of the word. Besides, the unwritten law, constituting a floating capital of pains and penalties too subtle to be permanently funded in black and white, has nothing whatever to do with reading, and can only be known by an especial grace, and a regular course of Temple legs of mutton.

The meaning of the dogma, then, is this, that divine Providence, having bountifully provided society with attorneys and counsel learned in the law, any man may, at the small charge of £2 2*s*., and a bill of costs, be duly advised on the speciality, as often as he may choose to exercise his free will, by putting his foot beyond the castle walls of his own house. To be ignorant of the law, in any particular, with such facilities for acquiring information, is wholly inexcusable. The law is, indeed, the perfection of human reason; and nothing can be more reasonable than such a decision!

The purposes for which books are consulted are various, and the art of reading varies accordingly. Some persons read only to propitiate sleep; and with them the whole art of reading lies in the choice of the books; a circumstance that may safely be trusted to instinct. Baker's Chronicles will answer as well as the best.

For those readers who, in Hamlet's phrase, seek nothing in books but "words, words, words," and who never arrive at the idea of a complete sentence, there are a number of prettily-printed, highly-illustrated volumes, which will occupy their time perfectly and pleasantly. The market being large, the supply is abundant; and the purchaser has only to complain of the *embarras de richesse*. But, for those readers who, in the act of perusal, think that they are thinking, who have a propensity of looking into mill-stones, and who will not be contented with less than the essence of things, reading is a very serious concern; and, if they mean to win the race, they must be careful not to bolt at the starting place.

Let such be duly convinced that the value of every book rests upon the intelligence of the reader, and that, unless the author's ideas are already implicitly in his mind, he will not read the book with effect.

"*Ce qui fait,*" says Champfort, "*le succés de quantité d'ouvrages, est le rapport qui se trouve entré la médiocrité des idées de l'auteur, et la médiocrité des idées du public.*" Such works find an

echo in almost every bosom. The ordinary reader feels himself in his own element. He does not meet with a mystery in every sentence, and a conundrum in every paragraph. He is not obliged at every page to "give it up," and run to a commentator for an explanation.

Let every reader, then, who desires to understand, examine carefully "*quid valeant humeri*," and not venture out of his depth before he has learned to swim. The neglect of this rule leads to much unprofitable reading; as in the case of that mathematician, who, after perusal of the Paradise Lost, discovered too late that it "proved nothing." Let not the unsuspecting Whig, therefore, meddle with the columns of the Standard. Let not Theodore Hook commit flirtation with Jeremy Bentham, whose works he will assuredly find no joke. Let the Moores and the Campbells eschew all treatises on the steam-engine, and let every man of sense avoid the transcendentalists like a pestilence.

But the choice of books is not always, alas! in our own possession. Accident, fashion, the absurd zeal of a patronizing friend, are constantly thrusting volumes *mal apropos* down an unwilling throat; or the necessity of answering objections may lead to the same disagreeable result. A second rule, therefore, is necessary to meet these cases, and that is, ever to read such books rigidly and uncompromisingly in your own system. All facts militating against your own opinions are to be disbelieved, explained away, or disregarded; all deductions,

hostile to your preconceived ideas, are to be set down as illogical; and the plainest and most obvious sentiments of the author are to be construed as containing a concealed and mischievous meaning.

No book, more especially, can be read with effect till the politics of the author are known. He is no good workman who finds it necessary to express in words all that he means to convey; and the subauditions and inferences of a clever writer are so much the more important, because they sink into the mind, without passing through the eye; and, therefore, they betray the judgment, without touching the conscience. But the politics of the author, like the subdominant and dominant in music, determine the key in which he is playing, and decide the harmony of the piece. Without this key, the reader will certainly mistake the meaning of many and many a passage.

Thus "piety," with a Sacheverel, means hating a dissenter; with a Fenelon, it has a more primitive signification. Thus, also, when a country squire talks of social order, he is to be read as meaning the game laws. "Good government" not long ago meant Gatton and old Sarum; and "loyalty" was equivalent with place and pension.

In more modern times, the difficulty of reading has been vastly increased by the unsteady application of words in different senses, on different occasions, and at different places. A speech delivered to constituents, or at the Goldsmiths' company, is not to be interpreted as if the sentiments were uttered in a

cabinet council; and an oration which is perfectly innocent *pro populo*, would be irrational and dangerous if delivered with closed doors *ad clerum*.

If the reader happens to belong to the same party as his author, let him take all equivocal expressions in the Johnsonian definitions of the words; but, in the other case, let him incontinently translate them into their opposites: for piety, read superstition; for social order, read oligarchical tyranny; for good government, understand the six acts; and, for loyalty, read slavish submission to the predominant faction.

Furthermore, by well weighing an author's position, you may penetrate still deeper into his more recondite philosophy, and understand not only his book, but himself, into the bargain. Thus, if the author of a red-hot pamphlet be a parson, you may be sure that in publishing, he looks principally to church preferment. If a young physician write on some particular mineral spring, the object of his book is clearly to monopolize the practice of the place where the water is to be drunk. If a briefless barrister publish an essay on finance, he certainly is endeavouring to prove that he is the fittest man in the world for a place under government. If he writes a commentary on Burn's justice, he intends to become a county chairman.

Another rule never to be neglected in the reading of any work, is to bear in mind that a certain considerable portion of all is dedicated expressly to the decencies of society; such are the tirades on

virtue, patriotism, and religion; on the excellence of our glorious constitution and the wisdom of the aristocracy; on respect for the liberty of the press, or the liberty of the subject, hearts of oak, and the battle of Waterloo. It is a great and a frequent *balourdise*, in inexperienced readers, to dwell upon such ornaments of the Corinthian capitals of polished literature, as if they were intended for the solid substratum of a powerful argument. They are, in fact, but so much "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal," meant to fill the ear, and to soothe the reader into an unsuspicious and dozing reception of the real pith and marrow of the discourse — no more.

Nothing can be so silly, and, at the same time, so unfair to the author as, in such a case, to tie him down to the letter, and to expect from him a precise and logical application of the passages in question. Whenever a writer has something to propose more than usually startling to the public, if he be wise, he commences with a double dose of this material. Newspaper editors are especially aware of the worth of the method; and they have sets of sentiments and phrases preliminary, ready cut and dried, to preface all manner of hardy or unpalatable assertions. They are never so loyal, as when on the eve of writing treason; never so pious, as when making an attack on the establishment; and never so much in love with freedom, as when advocating a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act.

The knowledge of this secret is turned to a good

account by the older quidnuncs, whose experience enables them to scent these *placebo* passages, at the first word; when they unceremoniously cut the whole tirade, and let the eye fall perpendicularly down the column, till it comes to the pith, cream, and quintessence of the matter really in hand.

A candidate at an election, be it then remembered, may, in his addresses to the county, profess the most profound esteem for his constituents, without compromising his right to purchase his return at five pounds a vote, if they cannot be had at a cheaper rate. To understand him in any other sense would be cruel. In like manner, the diatribe against quackery, the boastings of honour and secrecy in the puffs of an advertising surgeon, must not be mistaken for a pledge not to poison the patient.

The mystery of diplomacy lies very much in a judicious use of these figures of rhetoric; and, if that science has fallen into some discredit, it is because lawyers, divines, country justices, publishers, and even tailors and cheesemongers, have become such adepts in the application of its terms of art, as to have deprived statescraft and ambassadorship of half their dignity, grace, and imposing solemnity.

By the application of the rules here laid down, there are few books which he who runs may not read; and, when a reader fails, let it be a hint to him to suspect whatever he cannot thus understand. That, "what we cannot understand is nothing to

us," is the maxim of a latitudinarian; for an honest meaning can lack no cloak of verbal obscurity.

A poet has said contemptuously, "*tutti applaudir, niun comprese;*" and he was right: for there is no greater "mark of the beast," than the "*omne ignotum pro magnifico;*" and thus to be done, is perfectly plebeian!

Forget not, then, that there is an universal Freemasonry abroad; that every party endeavours to speak a jargon of its own, which shall only be understood amongst its own members; and you may rest assured, that, whatever is unintelligible at first sight, is no production of a friend; and must be the language of deceit. Besides, what you do not comprehend, must be contrary to what you do comprehend; and, on that account, contrary to common sense, and as absurd as it is dangerous.

Self-contradiction, be it also understood, makes nothing against the arguments of a writer of the true sort. "Cæsar does never wrong, but with good cause;" and, if such a one should change from black to white in the same breath, rest confident he has a sufficient reason for so doing. But, if the rogue writes for the enemy, the matter is *toto colo* changed: in that case, read him as Milton read Salmasius. Should he even agree with you in trifles, think, that, like his coadjutor, the devil, it is but to betray you "in deepest consequences;" and set it down boldly that he speaks in any other than the obvious sense. Recollect well what St. Augustine says, "that you may

safely praise or blame, without reference to general principles, by imputing intentions at pleasure, and availing yourself of the circumstances of the conjuncture." Remember that in hostile writers no trifles are unimportant; and, if you allow one word that they say to be true, you are never safe from being tossed on the horns of a dilemma.

It must, by this time, be sufficiently evident, that there is a very large class of authors, who address themselves exclusively to such readers as cannot read; and whose value depends altogether on the density of the public intellect. This class includes not only the mediocre who live by addressing the mediocre, but all those, who, by the cunning, contrive to feed the babes of literature from the pap-bowl of plausibilities. Civis and Vindex, and Junius Secundus, and a long list of paragraph-grinders of the same calibre, write very principally for the non-readers; and they are lost if they fall into the hands of one that can read. Such, too, are the writers of Fast sermons, judge's charges, and the royal proclamations of the celestial empire; whose occupation would be gone, if their riddle were once expounded.

Against writings of this sort, an honest plain man cannot be too much on his guard; but incomparably more dangerous are the works writtene xclusively for such as *can* read: for they are stuffed from beginning to end with that inflammable matter, which none but the expert can understand; and which, therefore, is the quintessence of disloyalty and infidelity.

Having established these points, enough has been done for "a first lesson." The tocsin has been sounded, and the world put on its guard against its own *bonhomie*. Fore-warned is fore-armed; and, after this notice, whoever is duped, will be the unpitied victim of his own self-conceit, and deserves to be dogmatized out of his senses.

It is lamentable to have been thus obliged to disturb the calm complacency of so many ignoramuses, in whose philosophy these refinements were never dreamed of; but something was necessary to be done, in order to remedy such crying abuses. Mean time, if the reader be desirous of further instruction, he is referred to "*Les Quinze Vingts*" at Paris, "*lieu, où les hommes gagnent leur vie à ne voir goute, comme aussi en plusieurs autres lieux.*" *

* Satire Menippée.

THE ABSURDITIES OF MEN OF MERIT.

" Que les gens d'esprit sont bêtes!"

Mariage de Figaro.

Society is, proverbially, intolerant of merit. Other aristocrasies are cheerfully acknowledged; rank is allowed, because it is an ancient and time-honoured convention; wealth, because it is a diffusible good, and repays the sycophant; but for personal endowments, there is no mercy. An acknowledgment of the supremacy of merit is extorted from the crowd, in spite of spite; and the world, compelled to admit the wide difference between itself and the man of genius, on his own particular ground, is perpetually on the search after collateral weaknesses and failings in his deportment, as a compensation for this provoking excellence, and as a means of re-establishing something like equality between the parties.

The French, who, with all their admiration for talent, are at once intolerant of inequality, and susceptible of the ridiculous, are especially prone to this species of levelling: and the jealous rivalry of their *savans* and *beaux esprits* has largely fed the

malignity of that nation with scandalous anecdote. There are few of the eminent wits of their Augustan ages of science and of literature, who have not thus contributed their full quota to the history of the littleness of great men.

Geniuses of the highest order are not more exempt from human infirmity than their neighbours; and there are few, even of the wisest and the best, who, when closely examined, will not, like the diamond, exhibit some flaw or stain, to detract from the purity and lustre of their water. Nor is this very difficult to explain. We are apt to speak of the human intellect, as of a simple unity; whereas, the intelligent and voluntary powers of the mind are complex aggregates of many independent faculties, each existing in its own degree of development, which has no obvious connexion with that of any of the rest. Genius, wisdom, and virtue, are each the result of its own peculiar combination of these faculties; and they are so far from being necessarily yoke fellows, that no sure inference can be drawn from the presence of any one concerning the probable expectation of the other two. "*Un cour faible,*" says Voltaire, "*peut subsister avec un esprit fort, car on peut penser fortement, et agir faiblement.*"

In point of fact, merits are almost ever specific, and what is called a great man is unfrequently not a very little man, great upon one point. A great musician may be, and often is, a great fool; a great mathematician may be a great rogue; and

it is possible for an admirable Crighton to be so lamentably deficient in some one element of character, as to excite the risibility of the dullest dog that ever tired the patience of a listener. Even madness is a partial, not a general malady; and, as there are monomaniacs, who, (as the word implies) are lunatic only on one subject, so there are monoelithiacs, who unite strong general powers of mind with a vein of folly that extends only to a single particular. Rousseau, quarrelling with his best friends, and Pascal indulging in the superstition of an ascetic, are by no means phenomena so rare in the literary and philosophic world as is commonly imagined.

But it is not alone through those weaknesses which genius inherits in common with flesh of inferior endowment, that merit lies open to the ridicule of mediocrity: the very qualities which lead to eminence are apt to expose their possessor to the world's contempt. The poetic temperament, or that constitution of organs, which engenders a susceptibility to the beautiful and the sublime, is in itself almost a disease; and it affects with many obvious peculiarities the whole round of thought and action. With a keener perception of externals, and a nicer susceptibility to moral relations, prompt sympathies and fiery passions, the poetic mind reacts upon nature and society by other laws than those which govern the movements of ordinary spirits: sometimes really disturbing the moral fitness, or the wisdom of conduct; and sometimes

merely producing whimsical results, which the world, for want of a key to the mysterious workings of genius, wrongfully censures as vicious or absurd. The man of genius, governed by feelings and desires which the world cannot appreciate, neglecting and despising interests which the world adores, and acting from impulses of which even himself is scarcely conscious, becomes, in the estimate of his contemporaries, a miracle or a monster of waywardness, inconsequence, and caprice.

Between the man of real endowment, and the mere common-place drudge, there is an infinite variety of shades. The combinations of particular faculties, in various degrees of development, are almost endless, and produce characters of various utility, respectability, and consistency. A great number of these intellectual complexes may suffice, (especially when favoured by external circumstances) to lead the possessor to distinction, or, at least to notoriety, without affording them a pretence to the higher order of celebrity.

In some, a vein of genius shows itself in the mere animal aptitude to combine and invent, without the perseverance, judgment, and taste necessary to the production of a great work. In others, talents for some particular arts, holding a powerful influence over the human imagination, exist, without any concomitant intellectual power. In others, strong passions and a determined volition supply the place of genius; and generate imitative excellence, which passes current with the world for originality.

In the estimate of the mass of mankind, all these powers are taken as equal; for all incomprehensibles are equal, in an imagination too narrow to embrace them. By this mistaking mere aptitude for genius, this confounding a particular talent with a comprehensive intellect, the world at large is betrayed into forming a lower estimate of the moral value of intellectual excellence, than is consistent with truth: and genius suffers for the sins of its spurious imitators. If due exception be made of the operation of accidental causes, it will be found that the really great men, who, in their respective lines have distinguished themselves by works of indisputable originality and value, are very generally remarkable for the respectability and morality of their worldly conduct.

It cannot be denied that talents of a high order are sometimes led astray by that enthusiasm, that "*foco animatore*," so necessary to the perfection of the imitative arts. Benvenuto Cellini, Caravaggio, and Spagnuoletti, are instances in point: and Salvator Rosa, though he deserves not to be placed in the same category with these wild artists, was yet sufficiently *bizarre*, to afford scope for the petty sarcasm of vulgar minds.

It is chiefly, however, among the geniuses of the second, third, and fourth rate, that either great vices, or striking absurdities, very notably detract from personal respectability. To give consistency and *à-plomb* to character, a sound judgment is essentially necessary; but no work of genuine

worth, even though it be a work of mere art, can be produced, without the exercise of a severe judgment. In the fine arts, it is true, feeling alone may produce striking effects; and, when these arts have been long cultivated, even a mere imitative power in the fingers' ends will suffice to make the trading professor a name; but the *capi d'opera* in painting, sculpture, and music, are not created without intellectual effort; and they who are capable of deep thought, have generally a wholeness and unity of character, well calculated to inspire respect. Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Titian, were no less remarkable for their personal excellences, and the vast scope of their mental powers, than for their ability as artists.

Glittering, however, as is the eminence assigned to poets, painters, and musicians, the highest intellectual honours are attained by persons whose energies are of a very different character, and seem to guarantee the utmost gravity and decorum both of thought and action: these are the scientific and the learned, mathematicians, philosophers, and statesmen. In minds of this class, concentration, or the aptitude for labour, seems to be the predominant characteristic; and accuracy and precision the prevailing excellences. Slow, painful, deliberate, the march of their ideas is almost necessarily determined in the narrow right-lined path of integrity and moderation. Yet it is in this class, most especially, that those ridicules are usually discovered, which furnish the armoury of small

wits with their pop-gun sarcasms against the merit they are sure to envy, and cannot equal.

The learned and the recluse are, above all others, liable to certain obvious and fantastic defects, which are dependant on a neglect of social forms, or on acquired habits, which the dull are careful to avoid themselves, and are apt to take note of in others. The man of intellectual labour commonly lives apart from what is called the world, and thus escapes from a social discipline, very necessary to rub off the asperities of selfishness, and to correct the whims and caprices that constitute *originality*, in the bad sense of the word. Rugged with the rust of a college, recluse students afford a thousand little salient points of humorous absurdity, which the microscopic eye of folly can measure with a fastidious accuracy. Their coat, perhaps, is unfashioned, their gait awkward, their manner in society bashful and embarrassed, or, haply, (from the want of something wherewith to measure themselves) presuming and overbearing. They are also not unfrequently conspicuous for some ungainly motion, some ridiculous *tic*, which gives them an air of imbecility in the eyes of those, who are utterly incapable of appreciating their solid excellence. Every blockhead could quiz the enormity of Dr. Parr's μεγα θαυμα, the extravagance of Johnson's outward demeanour, or the coarseness of Paley's northern dialect; but their intellects and acquirements could only be estimated by their equals.

In the scientific departments, which so frequently develop lowly and self-educated merit, genius is often marked by a simplicity and a confiding frankness of exterior, which the world accounts as folly; and the individuals are almost always guilty of a neglect of fashions and of observances, which is charged against them as vulgarity. What chance could an Emerson or a Watt stand of being respected in a mixed company, if he ate with a knife, or wore worsted stockings? The plainness of Roland's dress excited in the French court as much ill-will as his politics. "*Voyez donc,*" said the master of the ceremonies, "*pas même de boucles à ses souliers! tout est perdu.*"

A large harvest of ridicules is also furnished by a class of celebrities, whose merit is often of a very questionable quality — the men of mere learning. Learning, without judgment, is pedantry, and pedantry is a fault obvious and obtrusive. On the revival of letters, a multitude of blockheads and coxcombs arose to distinction, by dint of a parrot's memory, and an acquired knowledge, whose rarity was its only title to distinction. The Gaspar Scioppiuses and the Julius Cæsar Scaligers still continue to furnish a laugh against literary eminence, by many a tale of their egregious vanity, or of their insane vituperation of rivals. The absurd importance which such men confer on their own trifling pursuits, and the exaggerated price they set upon themselves, lead them to dispense with the merits of a decent exterior, or even of common

honesty in their intercourse with society: and the more absurd they are in conduct, the better they imagine themselves to have asserted their claims to extraordinary endowment.

In these various infirmities, abundant matter may be found, to justify the reproaches against real excellence, by which every-day personages indemnify themselves for the want of that "*digito monstrari*," in their fancy so enviable a distinction.

But if all is not gold that glitters, all is not dross which shows no metallic brilliancy. A great deal of what the world imputes against men of merit as antisocial or whimsical, is less referable to bad qualities in the individuals, than to the imbecility of those with whom they are obliged to live. Agreeability is a mutual relation; and harmony may be as effectually destroyed by an excess, as by a deficiency of tone. If the man of true genius is sometimes reputed a bore, or a dealer in paradox, it will be necessary to guage the quality of his society, before acceding to the judgment.

Is it the fault of the man of high intellectual powers, that, in every mixed society, he should encounter so few who can relish or comprehend any subject that is not either political or licentious? Is it his fault that, in contemplating things from a more elevated point of view, he sees many particulars which escape the cognizance of those below him? As justly might a foreigner be accounted dull, because he cannot speak the language of the country, as such a man be taxed with moroseness

or singularity, because his associates cannot rise to the level of his ideas.

He who is above the intellectual level of his company, is like the writer who has gotten the start of his age. Both are despised and neglected, because they are misunderstood and misrepresented. It is a heavy misfortune, but it is no fault, that they address a circle which cannot, or will not perceive its own deficiencies; that, abounding in ideas which are peculiarly their own, and thinking justly where others are in error, they are compelled to cast their pearls before swine, or, in Goldsmith's happy phrase,

"To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor."

But it may be said that the man of genius loses nothing by condescending to the level of his company, and by stooping to trifle with those whose nature or habits are unfitted for graver matters. To trifle agreeably, however, is not an every-day talent, and he who attempts its exercise in a circle of dullards, is deficient in tact, and will inevitably be set down as a fool. It is a good rule ever to be sure of your company, before venturing a joke, or hazarding a refined observation, even on the most familiar subject.

A mathematician would be justly blamed, who should strive to introduce his diagrams into general society; and genius, in every department, has what may be called its *shop* conversation. To introduce this, *mal à propos*, is an impertinence al-

together intolerable; but, in avoiding the error, the mere stooping to common-place subjects will not suffice. To descend to the level of an inferior person, is to enter into his mind, and to be aware of the full extent of its poverty—a power of no easy acquirement. The ideas and associations with which we are ourselves familiar, we naturally imagine to be held in common with others; and it is not until a man feels that he has puzzled, shocked, or scandalized his audience, that he discovers how far he has left his hearers behind him, and that he has suggested a very different train of ideas by his language, from that which it represents in his own mind. What he puts hypothetically, is haply taken affirmatively; or, when he uses a word in its strict technical meaning, it is perhaps received in some lax and popular sense, which disfigures the sentiment; or, it may be, that when he is humorous, he is understood as serious; and when he is sarcastic, he is translated into literal matter of fact.

Thus is the pleasantry of the polite scholar constantly mistaken for offence; and the simplest remark deemed dangerous or impertinent, because the company cannot fill up the sub-auditions, familiar to persons better instructed, or of quicker apprehension. Much of the truth or falsehood of conversational propositions depends on their connexion with something expressed, or implied in the preceding discourse: the greater, therefore, the *finesse* of the remark, the greater is the chance of

its passing with blockheads for a paradox or an absurdity.

Who is there among the class of readers to whom the subject of the present paper affords an interest, who has not, on many an occasion, found himself thus awkwardly situated in a circle of dull, matter-of-fact persons, ignorant of his most familiar quotations, inapprehensive of his imagery, insensible to his allusions, and construing every proposition into its direct contrary—until he has felt convinced that they have one and all convicted him in their own minds of blasphemy and treason, or at least set him down as a driveller and an idiot?

If the fool answers according to his folly, it is because he understands according to his folly. The wise speech, for the same reason, sleeps in the foolish ear; the fault lies in the *ratio recipientis*. A Newton or Bacon would come off but second best in an encounter of the wits with the members of the "Free and easy Foxhunters," or the "Eccentrics' Club;" yet the club-room is but an exaggeration of the dullness too common in what is ordinarily considered the very best company.

A few experiences of this species of disappointment will drive a modest man into silence, and reduce even the highest endowments below the conversational level of those who have little besides impudence and garrulity to help them. Despairing to make himself intelligible, or of entering into the nothingness and inanity which form the circulating medium of ordinary society, the man of merit seeks

a refuge in abstraction; and gives place to more flippant speakers, from a disgust, which is at once attributed to superciliousness or incapacity.

The greater the intellectual superiority of the individual, the greater is the probability of his falling into one particular species of practical error—an over-refinement of conjecture upon motives and probabilities. Over estimating the intelligence of those with whom he has to deal, he becomes the dupe of his own superiority. "Let us search this house," says one of a party in pursuit of a thief, "for the sign announces it to be the house of call for his countrymen." "No," replied the other; "he will hardly take refuge where he must expect to be looked for." "You are wrong," said a third; "he will calculate on our coming to your conclusion, and will hide in this very house, because he must think that we shall suppose it the last place where we should expect to find him." The house was searched on this refined speculation, time was lost, and the thief passed uninterrupted on his journey, for a reason all had overlooked—he could not read.

No one is less capable of foreseeing and guarding against the silliness of others, than he who is not silly himself; exactly as the loyal-minded are the least protected against the plotting of traitors. If *la méfiance est la mère de la sûreté*, none are in such danger as the worthy and the wise. He who separates himself from the world, though it be by rising above it, becomes proportionately weak, and

(in as far as he is dependent upon opinion) miserable. It is not every Democritus who finds an Hippocrates, possessed of the public ear, to protect and encourage him.

In private life, men of real merit are seldom found to err widely through inequality of character. If they do not possess an absolute wholeness and unity of disposition, they have sufficient self-command to preserve the decencies. Whartons and Rochesters are rare exceptions; and even their shewy qualities are of a nature too equivocal to be taken on trust. The bare fact that they have not turned their excellence to a useful purpose, is presumptive proof that it was not what it has been supposed.

It is in the conduct of public affairs, that men, in many respects superior, are most likely to break down, and to become the wonder and the reproach of their age. Duclos, in his treatise on the manners of his own times, attributes some of these failures to a want of agreement between the character and the wit; that is, to speak more precisely, between the will and the intellect. If there are many varieties of intellectual power, there are as many dispositions and tendencies to various action: and if a man's impulses are not in harmony with his powers, he cannot succeed.

A decided passion for public affairs is not unfrequently combined with a capability only for abstract reasoning, inapplicable to the complex relations of real life. Thus a statesman may have

extensive views, and form grand designs, and yet be baffled and disgusted with the commonest obstacles in the details of business. He may want the promptitude to encounter unforeseen opposition, or the adroitness which wields at pleasure the wills of others; or he may be destitute of that perseverance and firmness of purpose, without which great masses are not to be moved.

Often, when the character and the intellect tend to the same point, their forces are still unequal. The volition is often the feeblest, where the intelligence is the most piercing; and ministers of undoubted talent, with liberal views, honest intentions, and great powers of combination, for want of a strong passion to energize volition, are incapable of conducting a continuous action to a successful issue.

This deficiency has sometimes been attributed to the Liberals, as a party, of whom it is said, that they see what is right, and desire to effectuate it: but removed by aristocratic influences above the people whose good they seek, and without the corrupt interests which bind their opponents into a phalanx, they want that intensity of purpose, that should give efficacy to their designs. Such men are easily turned aside from their purpose. They are the victims of minor considerations. Even their ambition is fluctuating and intermittent; and it alternates with paroxysms of indolence, of pleasure, &c. &c. &c.

Of still more frequent occurrence, are statesmen

in whom the most unbounded ambition, the strongest passion for affairs, the firmest purpose, and the most undaunted courage, are united with absolute mediocrity of talent, and narrowness of conception. Those who are not admirers of the late Lord Castlereagh will very probably place him in this category; and it is one of the most mischievous to a country that a minister can stand in. In such a character, failure inspires no self-doubting, and demonstrated error begets no hesitation. The will is exalted, not checked, by the show of opposition; and perseverance degenerates into obstinacy.

There are occasions in which the greatest statesmen have become the victims of some accidental circumstance, acting on slight inequalities between the intellect and the will. The volition of Napoleon at Moscow thus obscured his judgment, and betrayed him into the deepest consequences. His extraordinary powers of combination, which had hitherto never failed him, could not triumph over the preponderance of one idea, rendered prepotent by its coincidence with his intense passion. In the campaign of 1814 and 1815, the two forces were in the strictest harmony, and the results were the most brilliant of his eventful life. After the battle of Waterloo, his voluntary power, subdued by repeated misfortune, wholly failed him. His mind was crippled, nay, palsied by despair; and when he had no longer the energy to avail himself of his remaining resources, he fancied that he was ac-

tuated by a respect for human life, and a patriotic regard for the welfare of his country.

Talleyrand, with the highest intellectual powers, was but "*un grand homme manqué*," for want of a character sufficiently energetic to have placed him at the head of events. With a mind capable of directing the energies of France, he had a will fitted only for playing second fiddle; and his ambition was ever placed at the service of others.

Louis the Sixteenth had, perhaps, the full average intellect of his family, and he had ten times their average heart. He perished, the victim of an utter incapacity for forming a decided volition. Louis the Eighteenth died on the throne, because these faculties, without being eminent, were in equilibrium; and because, united, they were equal to the circumstances in which he was placed. Charles the Tenth lived in exile, because, with the weakest of intellects, he was the most obstinate of mortals.

In politics, the greater the genius, the more fatal are the consequences of this species of inequality; and "*magnis tamen excidit ausis*" might be the motto of some of the greatest men who have filled thrones, or directed the affairs of powerful nations. The more extensive the intellectual grasp of a public man, the more he is placed at the mercy of circumstances. In politics, and in war, much must be left to chance; but a happy union of intelligence and firmness can alone determine how much should be trusted to events; and decide when an object should be pursued to all lengths, or safety

be secured by a timely retreat. The world judges in these cases exclusively by success; and it places the leader, who has not failed simply because he has not attempted, before the most daring spirits and penetrating geniuses, whose designs fortune has not seconded in the execution.

There is a foolish question agitated among moralists, whether talents are desirable — whether a parent should wish his child to be a genius. The question, if it merits an answer, is easily decided. Genius is but an instrument; and its influence upon happiness depends on the nature of its employment. Increase of power is valuable only as it is swayed by a regulated will; and any intellectual endowment which only enables its owner to give more effect to his caprices, places him in a false position, and must become the source of misery. To virtue and to vice, to wisdom and to folly, mere talent is in itself indifferent: an intellectual education, unaccompanied by moral development, is a discord, that cannot produce sweet music; but when the two go together, intellectual power in all its modifications is good; for intellect is power, and power well directed is happiness.

There is, however, some truth in the notion that great endowments, and more especially a decided excellence in the imitative arts, affect our relations to society in a way not always favourable to happiness, by originating ideas and associations at variance with our fortunes. With the mental, as with the bodily functions, whatever is gained in

extent of mobility, is lost in security and precision of action; and as the shoulder is more liable to dislocation than the hip, so a susceptible temperament is exposed to accidental displacements, when coarser minds are secured in their inefficiency.

But then, it must not be forgotten, that with such liabilities, men of genius have chances of success, far beyond those of ordinary characters. If life be better than death, and wakefulness be preferable to sleep, genius must (every thing considered) be more desirable than mediocrity and dullness.

AN ESSAY ON COALS.

"In-*grate*-um si dixeris, omnia dixeris."

In commencing an Essay on Coals, two very opposite prejudices stare an unfortunate author in the face. First, there is that commonest of all presumptions, which induces men of little calibre to imagine that nothing exists in nature, or in art, beyond the very narrow sphere of their own comprehension. "Coals," quoth the representative of this faction, with a contemptuous twist of his nose, "what on earth has the man to say on that subject? Is he going to rip up the disputes of a late lord mayor, and to call the monopolising owners of the great mines of the north over their own commodity? Surely there is nothing new or interesting to be said on that matter."

Opposed to this opinion are the trembling susceptibilities, of him who knows the full extent, the wide encyclopædia of learning embraced by the theme, and who foresees in the opening of such a mine, nothing less than a very great *bore*. "To

do common justice to the subject of coals, what a question" (he will say) " presents itself at the very starting place, in their disputed origin and geological history. Why, the very fossil Flora connected with this singular formation, would alone occupy a life of ordinary labour and industry. The chemical and economical department of the inquiry, too, what a field is there! to say nothing of the very intricate and very essential episode concerning smoky chimneys and smoke-consuming furnaces, and a *réchauffé* of the history of the musical " Small-coal man."

Between the dilemma of these hostile conclusions the essayist is shut in, nut-cracker-wise; or, to speak without a metaphor, stands a fair chance of losing a large part of the good-will of his proposed readers, who will either " skip and go on," in search of something which promises better sport, or lay it by for a more convenient season, when there shall be sufficient leisure to enter upon so weighty a matter.

If the subject adopted for this paper had been of what Swift would have called a more *critical* nature—had it concerned the old lady of Babylon, or her twin sister in iniquity, the other old lady of Throgmorton Street — had it proposed for discussion the way in which Shakespeare spelled his name, the authenticity of Ossian's Poems, the Catholic Question, or Napoleon's quarrel with Sir Hudson Lowe — had it, in short, touched upon something, concerning which everything, to the pur-

pose, and from the purpose, had been repeated *ad nauseam*, no such doubts would have arisen. Readers of all dimensions would have found themselves *en pays de connoissance*, and have fallen-to like French falconers: but coals! that theme untouched of all essayists in prose or verse! it will be as forbidding, as the first attempt to swallow an oyster!

This is a great disadvantage, and discouraging enough, Heaven knows; but *le vin est tiré*, and it must be swallowed. Nothing, therefore, remains but to adopt the practice and language of showmen, and to courteously request all whom it may concern to walk in and "see what they shall see;" promising, for our own sakes, to be as original, and as little tedious as possible, and expressing an humble hope that curiosity will not be wholly disappointed.

There is, *per contra*, one merit connected with the theme, which will afford a considerable set off against its novelty, and ought to remove from it a large weight of that suspicion which falls in this country, on every thing unbacked by precedent—it is a truly English question. Coals, however new to literature, are as matters of fact amongst the most familiar objects of an Englishman's experience—an object of which, if he does not boast, as of the crowning excellence of his fortunes, (especially when he shall have read what is here to be advanced on that head), he will be more ungrateful to nature and to Providence than it becomes a good Christian to shew himself.

Poets in general, and all dealers in figure, have taken a fancy to couple Old England with the watery element; and historians and political writers (adopting the notion on trust) have attributed the national superiority in everything feasible and cognizable, to the circumambient ocean, by which the people are insulated from the less gifted races of human beings. From Horace, with his *divisos orbe Britannos*, to Dibdin's "Go patter to lubbers," and "England's best bulwarks," the sea has been assigned on all hands as the Englishman's element. But this is a great mistake.

An Englishman's true element (and it is strange that the fact should have escaped the whole ballad-making crew) is fire. The English soldier is steady under fire, the English poet writes with fire, the English merchant is famous for the many irons he has in the fire, and there are more fire insurance offices in London alone, than in all the rest of the world. In one word, no nation exists that has so completely obtained a mastery over every department in which fire is brought into action. Chemistry, metallurgy, dyeing, brewing, distilling, cotton-spinning and weaving, horse-shoeing, gas-lighting, and steam navigation, are the distinguishing excellences of our happy land; and it cannot be doubted that men will "think ere many days are gone," that the High-mettled Racer himself must ultimately yield the *pas* in the Meltonian field to fire, and get his supersedeas from a tea-kettle.

If the Irish antiquarians are right, and if it be true that the Druids worshipped the fire-god Bel, there must have been something more than accidental in the coincidence; for fire has become to the Englishman what Socrates prophetically said of it in the general, "his fellow-workman in every art."* Even theology in these days is based on a due application of fire; and if we do not still worship it in the same way as our Druidical ancestors, its agency as an instrument of morals and happiness is very universally invoked. But on theology politics rest as on a pedestal, and fire enters still more largely into our statescraft, as presiding over the three great engines of policy, "killing, burning, and destroying."

Let people, therefore, talk as they will of our glorious constitution, the right thinking will be more inclined to celebrate our glorious coal-mines. Great Britain is more indebted for all that renders it "the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world," to Mulciber, than to Minerva: and Venus was not so much out, as some have thought, when she preferred the sooty divinity of Lemnos for a husband, to all the smarter, but less serviceable gods of Olympus. The steam-engine, indeed, the latest born, but greatest of the sons of Vesta, has become a fourth estate in the

* Επικουρον δε σποτους, συνεργον δε προς πασαν τεχνην, και παιδα ὁσα ωφελιας ἑνεκα ανθρωποι καλασκευαζονται.

Xenoph. Mem. Socrates.

realm, and is fairly worth the other three. It is the vivifying principle of taxation, and is a more powerful conservator of the peace, than an army of new police, or a host of vice-suppressing associations. The instant it stops working, the people become turbulent and discontented, and when it resumes its activity, the agitator's "occupation is gone." The steam-engine is the real and effectual balance in the state, it maintains the credit of the national debt, it is the thunderbolt of war, and the fruitful olive of peace.

Even the people themselves (for whom alone wrong-headed radicals maintain that government exclusively should subsist) may become too numerous; and may thus prove more burdensome to the state, than an extravagant court, a grasping aristocracy, or a greedy church; but there is nothing *exigeant* in the nature of the steam-engine. When it cannot work, it does not jacobinically insist upon eating; and, like a good and pious machine as it is, takes no thought wherewith it shall be clothed. When pressed too hard, it may, like those living machines the mob, haply make "a blow-up;" but its safety-valves are much more easily managed, and are more to be depended upon: besides, the burst once over, the steam-engine becomes as tame and harmless as a child; whereas the people go on thundering at the door of the legislature with accelerated impetus, and at every rent they effect in the coercing medium, acquire fresh force for a renewed

explosion, till institutions are cut into ribbons, and order is utterly subverted.

Steam-engines are, therefore, better subjects than men; they have many advantages also over the aristocracy. They never combine to make corn dear; they have no younger children to quarter on the public; nor do they insist upon making their tutors bishops; they never rat for a ribbon, nor sell their country for an empty title. In the hands of Perkins himself, "with all appliances and means to boot," they indulge not in murderous *battus;* nor do they fortify their preserves with laws which exceed the atrocity of a Draco.

As to the first order of the state, we must refrain from odious comparisons; but it is no treason to assert, that steam-engines, when well used, can really, and without figure of speech, do no wrong. The world has never yet heard of one that was a jesuit, like Charles X.; or set itself against learning, like the Emperor Francis; or was as absurdly tyrannical as a Miguel or a Ferdinand. A steam-engine may be as indifferent to human suffering, as a Nero or a Henry VIII., and it will assuredly chop off the best head that ventures to thrust a nose across the career of its humour; but, then, it never goes out of its way to do mischief, being contented to leave those alone who let it alone; and, as kings in general go, that is no trifling advantage to the subject.

It is unnecessary to remind the reader (such being the case), that coals are to the steam-engine

what mind is in the microcosm. Hippocrates, indeed, carried this analogy one point further, when he declared pure fire to be the moving principle of life, which sets the piston of the heart in motion, and opens and shuts the valves of the arteries, as the grosser element does those of the steam-engine.

Whatever good has been predicated of the engine, is implicitly predicable of the fuel, which gives it activity. On this account, it is a little unreasonable, perhaps, to object to the political influence of the Lowther family; for, as lords of the coalmines, and possessors of that which is the *primum mobile* of the state, the *summum bonum* of our national being, they ought to have some finger in the pie.

This is a question of national import; not so the objection which foreigners make to the smoke of London—an objection as impertinent as it is infelicitous, smacking, at least, as much of envy as of dislike. That majestic canopy of rarified soot is rather to be regarded as the regal diadem of

"Old King *Coal*, that jolly old soul,"

more typical of the wealth and power it overshadows, than the richest jewels that were ever *hired* for a coronation.

The crystallized carbon, which, under the name of diamond, sparkles on the brow of royalty, is but a childish bauble, estimable only for its rarity and inutility; it mitigates no human sorrow, it

cuts no pains (*panes*), except in the hands of the glazier. Barren and unproductive, it shines rather as a pharos, to warn mankind, than to attract them by its glitter: but the black diamond warms, and cherishes, and protects. It is the raw material of industry, ingenuity, and order—the first cause of diffusive wealth, comfort, and respectability. More powerful than destiny itself, it annihilates both time and space. Mastering the winds of heaven, it enables Britannia, without a metaphor, to rule the waves; and, in the mightiness of its strength, it reduces the fable of Briareus to a cold and trifling conceit.

Coal likewise triumphs in the moral world. It has added fresh wings to the press; and, by diffusing knowledge with increased rapidity, it rules the intellects, as it presides over the physical welfare of nations. Coal is, moreover, the concentrated essence of democracy, the supremacy of the people, the only effective antagonist of the conqueror's sword, and of the statesmen's craft. Stretched on its dark and dingy bed, from the depths of its cavernous palaces, it gives the law to the "Sophy on his throne;" and says to the emperor of half the world, "thus far shalt thou go, and no further." Coal armed the coalition of European kings, and was more fatal to Napoleon, than the snows of Moscow.

It is not without reason, that the Englishman takes for his motto "*pro aris et focis;*" for his domestic fires are his wealth, and his wealth is his

religion. If the children of the East were excusable for worshipping the sun, that splendid type of creative power, the Englishman is still better justified for honouring his coalmines. What is the sun (of England)?—less glorious than the moon of Naples, it is wrapped in clouds, and shrouded in ungenial mists. Coal is the Englishman's sun; its fostering warmth never deserts him, amidst the rigours and inclemencies of the fiercest summer. It lights his dreary path in the long nights of winter, while the sun is coquetting with the antipodes; and it ripens his grapes and his cucumbers, when the celestial luminary churlishly refuses to bring to maturity a potato or a cabbage.

Coal does not exhale the pestilence of the marsh, inflict a dysentery, nor strike down a Hercules, like a *coup de soleil.* Unlike the balmy skies of the south, the atmosphere of coal speaks not of sloth and slavery; nor does it tell of burning passions, of implacable hate, causeless jealousy, and murderous revenge. The cheerful glow of a sea-coal fire is the very spirit of domesticity, and of conjugal faith; it kindles the torch of Hymen, and preserves its fire pure and eternal as the vestal flame.

Seated in his chimney corner, the father of the family feels his heart dilate with affection for his wife and children, as the benign influence of the fuel sends its efficacy from the feet to the centre of the circulation. If the imagination of his chaste moiety should for a moment roam towards the false

splendours of the world, one ray from the cheerful hearth brings back the wanderer, by recalling it to the comforts of domesticity.

The aspect of nature in its summer smiles provokes a meditative and antisocial feeling, inspiring independence, and therefore coldness; but the blazing hearth produces more expansive impulses, awakens sociality, kindles philanthropy, and knits the affections of mankind in the closest union. Who will doubt that England alone could have produced that effusion of tenderness and sensibility, "Home, sweet home;" or attribute its inspiration to any other cause, than the abundance and excellence of the national fuel? Matrimony may be as gloomy, cold, and churlish, as satyrists and comic writers pretend; but it cannot resist the expansive sympathies of a cheerful grate. Wisely and prudently, then, do our daughters, in their selection of a mate, give the preference to him, who is best able to keep the pot boiling, and is least likely to live in the fear of a coal-merchant's bill.

Of all the distinctions known to English society, the title of housekeeper is the most respectable. To "keep crock and pan" is the Irish phrase for respectable incumbency, because in that country the abundance of turf makes a hearth no distinction; but in England, housekeeping, which is the assurance of maintaining many hearths, is the proper test of virtue, and of aptitude for public functions. It is not, therefore, without political wisdom, that pot-walloping has been made a cause of elective fra-

chise, in the British constitution; for he who cannot afford to boil a pot, must be incapable of maintaining those far more expensive things, "the relations of amity and social order," and therefore he ought not to be entrusted with the liberties of the country.

The influence of coal on the head is not less striking and extensive, than its power over the heart. Coal expands the intellect, developes genius, and contributes largely to the quickening of the march of mind. Apollo, assisted by the nine Muses, and mounted on his winged nag, Pegasus, whose feet naturally run into metres, never performed half the deeds in literature, which are daily effected under the inspiration of the best Wall's End. That leviathan of learning, Dr. Johnson, bore ample testimony to the virtues of a coal fire, and of the influence upon bright thoughts, which it exercises through the medium of the teakettle.

But we need not individual testimony of this truth. Take away fires, and the reign of the blue stockings would be as defunct as that of Nebucadnassor. Let the muffins be "cold and neglected," and let the coffee cease to steam, and the Royal Society would be completely *à sec*. If the tea-tables of some half-dozen literary ladies were overset, half the gorgeous poets and sermonizing essayists in town might hang themselves "in their own garters;" and without the same exhilarating beverage, the religious zeal of cælebs-hunting young ladies would fall below zero.

Even now, while sitting by a snug, comfortable fireside, surrounded by books, with curtains closed, the urn bubbling, with the Argand lamp brightly trimmed, and (above all) the Cannel coal shedding its not "intolerable day," the very symbol of enjoyment—one feels the kindling god within, while thoughts come skipping with an alacrity which sets the raging snowstorm at contemptuous defiance. How different from those ancient times, when the student buried his knees in a basket of straw, for want of a peck of coals to thaw his ice-bound genius!

Coal is not only the cause of talent and of virtue, but the instrument which gives utility to much of human action. Vain were the hospitality of the most generous Amphitryon, if unseconded by a good fire. The richest and most epicurean fare goes away unenjoyed, if the guest freezes in the north-east corner of the dining-hall, near an ever-open door, and half a world away from the glowing hearth. Vainly, also, would the sun of France ripen the grape, to cheer the heart of man, to cultivate friendship, and to beget good-will to all, if coal did not conspire to the same end, by forming the light and transparent glass, which betrays the brilliance of the wine, and commends it to the lip.

But why dwell thus upon particulars? The simple want of fuel strikes whole districts with sterility, and stamps the foreheads of their population with the hardened characters of guilt; where the discovery of a coal-mine would at once diffuse ho-

97850

nesty, industry, and happiness, as if by the wand of an enchanter.

"*Virtus,*" says the poet, "*laudatur et alget;*" which is as much as to declare that praise is a sufficient reward for the virtue which is not warm; and it would be difficult to assign a good reason why the lower regions should be paved (as they are said to be) with good intentions, if it be not in the hope that the warmth of the climate may thaw them into overt acts.

It is a matter well worthy the consideration of the Right Reverend the Bench of Bishops, how far the spread of sectarianism may depend on the chill damp of our churches, and on the larger economy of fuel in chapels and gospel-shops. An eloquent preacher is thrown away upon an auditory, whose piety is frozen in their fingers' ends; whereas the most frigid of sermons may kindle a religious fervour in hearers surrounded by an atmosphere not below 60°.

Talk not of warm hearts! warm feet are the sources of genuine benevolence; and the hand of charity will not be extended to less purpose, for being cherished in an Angola glove. Hearts, indeed, cannot be warm, when the extremities are cold; yet are the cold-hearted proverbially selfish. The man whose nose turns cold when he is angered, is to be feared, as he is hated; his vengeance is deadly. But the hot-tempered opponent, whose countenance glows when he is enraged, is a generous and a forgiving enemy. We call a man of

wealth a "warm fellow," to indicate that he possesses that which all men esteem. The flame of genius, in like manner, is a phrase which marks our instinctive notions concerning the source and origin of intellectual endowments; while our detestation of death is exhibited in the distasteful epithet of a "cold" grave. Money, therefore, is well and facetiously called "the coal;" the phrase being perfectly "germane to the matter." To be physically without fire, is to be divested of all that makes life worth having; while to be spiritually so, is to be without virtue, genius, or courage, without sensibility to beauty, or resentment for wrong. Even in the burning desarts of Arabia, a peck of coals would be a blessing; for, if the pilgrim sometimes perishes there, for want of a draught of cold water, he is also compelled to eat his food uncooked, from the total absence of any thing combustible to dress it withal.

If love, then, "is heaven, and heaven love," coal is equally virtue, and virtue is coal. With infinite veneration, therefore, should we behold the heavily-laden waggon working its slow and painful course up the steeps of the Adelphi, or emerging from the purlieus of St. Clement Dane's. With reverence should we make way for the broad-flapped, long-whipped dispenser of oaths and "whoeys," who conducts it! Slumbering in its charge, lie the unwrought elements of an infinity of excellences and utilities—or (if abused) the first cause of a thousand crimes, follies, and woes. There, repose uncon-

cocted hearts'-ease and hilarity, or, it may be, the serpents of discord, and the artillery of war;—the untasted sweets of the sugar-baker, or the condensed form which gives explosiveness to gunpowder;—the possible cannon that is to defend the country, or the unborn pike that is to overthrow the state;—the razor which may shave a beard, or cut a throat, the lancet which may breathe a vein, or insert a deadly poison.

Those panting, straining horses, the pride of London, labour in their convulsive efforts to transport an inert mass, which contains a motive energy sufficient to carry the largest vessel to some far-distant port. More awful still, murder and violation may ensconce themselves within the tarred and sooty bags, awaiting their hour to escape upon the world, through the incendiary worm of a spirit-still. In the dark and dingy load is concealed a load which may develop the most important truths, or baffle the deepest conspiracy of crime; or perhaps, as chance directs the devious conduit-pipe, may "waste its sweetness" upon the idleness of a ball-room, and set forth to advantage the charms of the lady-killing Adonis! It may second the madness of the new light, or illumine the collective wisdom of a Reformed Parliament. It may melt the wax which shall seal the liberties of an empire, or temper the blade which shall redeem nations from oppression. Unmarked of the heedless multitude who pave the well-trodden pavement of Fleet Street and the Strand, it may perchance dress their bridal

dinner, or weld the spade which shall dig their unthought-of grave.

The coal-waggon is the Thespian car of life's drama, the ambulant encyclopedia of human interests, the brief abstract of all our sayings and doings, the little cause of mighty effects, the embryo destiny of immortal souls! As it wends its predestined way to the theatre, or the conventicle, to the gaming-house, or the hospital, it may become the instrument of eternal wretchedness, or of happiness everlasting. It may help luxury to waste the body and enervate the soul; or it may aid charity in benefitting the earth, and winning heaven.

Wretched, miserable humanity, of what trifles art thou the creature! Let but that unconsidered and unmissed mass of matter be now annihilated—let all its consequences be swallowed up and annulled; and the fate of the remotest generation that shall live and suffer to the fullness of time, may be changed in its minutest particulars.

Go, then, proud, presumptuous man—boast of your faculties, vaunt your free will, triumph in your immortality, chain down Omnipotence to your narrow conceptions, and make your petty thoughts the measures of eternal wisdom! what are you, after all, but the sport of an accident—the unconscious victim of a chaldron of coals!

CURIOSITY.

"A pretty general belief is entertained that curiosity is the strongest in the rudest and least cultivated stages of society. All my experience goes in the other direction."

Hall's South American Voyage.

THERE are few readers of the present day, it may be presumed, who have not paid their visit to Paul Pry; and, while offering an involuntary tribute of inextinguishable laughter to the merits of a great actor, have not likewise indulged in a complacent comparison between themselves and the curious impertinent, whose anxiety in other people's concerns brings him into so many scrapes.

This self-gratulation is very natural; but it is not very just. The desire of knowledge is innate in human nature. We are all born more or less of a Paul Pry, and inherit a good dash of the temperament of "our general mother." But what of that? There is nothing to be ashamed of in this much decried propensity. Knowledge, as Lord Bacon and the prospectus of every new magazine

reports, is power; and power is a very valuable consideration, and a rational object of desire. But, without curiosity, there could be little or no knowledge; for knowledge is a fruit which no longer grows upon trees: on the contrary, it partakes more of the nature of the truffle, and must be dug for by those who are desirous of tasting it.

The distinction, which is so improperly set up between laudable and idle curiosity, is altogether untenable. No one is curious about that which does not interest him; and on that point every one must be left to judge for himself. To be curious, no matter about what, is to be moved by the passion which led Newton to the discovery of gravitation, and enabled Franklin to disarm Jove of his thunders. In what did La Place, when taking measure of a comet's beard, as it wandered in the extreme bounds of space, differ from Socrates calculating the length of a "flea's hop?" Or in what does the member of a Linnean society, who pries into the secrets of cryptogamic love, exceed "Peeping Tom of Coventry?" Homer has made it a matter of boast concerning Calchas, that he knew the past, the present, and the future:—

Ὃς ἤδει τά τ' ἐόντα, τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα, πρό τ' ἐόντα.

But if this was the case, he must have troubled himself with a vast many things which did not in the least concern him; and must have indulged in as much idle curiosity, as the arrantest Paul Pry in Christendom.

No matter, then, for the subject of investigation, the curious are all alike entitled to take rank as philosophers: and it cannot but be accounted strange, considering the prevalent conspiracy amongst literate and illiterate, to give the moral world a decided pre-eminence over the physical, that those ethic philosophers who employ themselves in investigating family secrets, and watching the conduct of their neighbours, should have been selected as especial subjects for ridicule and censure. What can be more noble than the scope of their inquiries? The "*quid vèrum atque decens,*" of which Horace makes such a fuss, is their especial care. The former they carry into the minutest particulars; and the latter they never suffer to be violated by any man or woman within the range of their inquiries, without duly denouncing the fact to public opinion.

To have thoroughly studied any one subject, is sufficient praise to ordinary talent: a conchologist, or an excavator of tumuli, is, by courtesy of England, qualified as a learned man; but the inquiries of a Paul Pry embrace nothing less than the whole field of morals, the "*quicquid agunt homines,*" from an intrigue in a garret, to a pudding on the kitchen fire.

Nor is this range of intellectual exertions more praiseworthy, than the expansion of sympathies, which interests the curious in matters that afford them neither personal advantage, nor subject them to personal loss. An incurious mortal is,

eo nomine, of necessity, selfish. He reads the name of his nearest neighbour in the papers, and pauses not to inquire whether it stands recorded among the births, the marriages, or the deaths: "*celà lui est égal.*" Intent upon his own affairs, he looks to the price current, or the advertizing columns, and leaves Mr. Spriggins to marry, have children, or go to the devil, as destiny, and the three learned professions, may decree. The curious man, *per contra*, is not only diligent in discriminating these particulars, but he is miserable till he learns the colour of your child's eyes, the marriage portion of your bride, and whether you have been buried in a patent coffin, or have not received a vestment of lead.

The love of fame, so dear to the noblest and the best of the species, is but the desire of occupying the attention of mankind: valuable, then, is the curious neighbour, without whose aid the majority of mankind would live unobserved, and die unheeded. By his assistance, the humblest is at least assured of one friend, whose thoughts are fixed on making his words and deeds as diffusively known, as the widest sphere of one man's energies will admit.

Neither is it a trifling merit in the minutely curious, that they give daily bread to an infinity of pressmen, type-founders, paper manufacturers, compositors, readers, and penny-a-line men, who would starve, but for the laudable desire of the Pry family, to know every thing of every body,

from the king to the cobbler. Without the exemplary patience which enables so many of this class to wade through the parliamentary debates, the two houses might as well shut up shop: for, except in the indulgence of what is called idle curiosity, it would be difficult to assign any other motive, to induce any mortal man's undertaking so laborious a course of action.

The English, who have acquired the reputation of being a thinking nation, are yet the most curious people of Europe; mixing themselves in the private affairs of the most distant nations, intriguing with the Turk, watching the Russian, and setting spies upon the shah of Persia, going every where, and seeing every thing that is to be seen wherever they go.

So innately anxious for knowledge is a true John Bull, that his whole conversation is made up of interrogatories: when all other matter fails him, he finds full employment for his time and faculties in incessantly repeating three questions. "How do ye do? What news? and what's o'clock." Some are still alive to remember when the *élite* of the land spent whole mornings in the streets watching the goings and comings of old Blucher, and following the motions of the Emperor of Russia. Thousands, likewise, put themselves within danger of being crushed to death, that they might see the passage of the Duke of York's funeral. Nay, there is not a spectacle, from a coronation to a cock-fight, from a burning moun-

tain to a burking establishment, that does not congregate its mob of English spectators.

No one, then, with a grain of patriotism, will presume to speak ill of curiosity. Great authorities, it is true, may be quoted against this passion; but where is the absurdity which great authorities have not sanctioned? Lot's wife was certainly a melancholy monument of a salt itch for the indulgence. Poor Mrs. Bluebeard, also, narrowly escaped paying with her head for inconsiderate peeping; and Psyche's misadventures have been said or sung in all languages. But, in these cases, the punishment was more directed against the disobedience of the parties, than against their abstract thirst for knowledge. As for Lot's wife, every body runs to a fire, without sustaining greater penalties than the loss of a watch, or a pocket handkerchief: Mrs. Bluebeard ought to have been acquitted on the plea of self-preservation: and, with respect to Psyche, it was most unreasonable to suppose she could lay her head near that of her husband, without some desire of seeing what was the colour of his whiskers.

Besides, these examples prove too much; for in every recorded instance of such cruel injunctions, against the indulgence of a natural propensity, from Eve to Orpheus, and from Orpheus to the aforesaid Mrs. Bluebeard, the command has uniformly been broken; which shows to demonstration that the passion for prying is *plus forte que nous*, and that we are not accountable for its workings. If curiosity be really a heinous offence, God help

Belzoni and Dr. Young, who could not even let the Pharaohs rest quiet in their graves; and God help all residents in country towns, where curiosity is an ever reigning epidemic!

A curious man is necessarily endowed with many virtues, or, at least, his curiosity stands him in the place of many. Industry and perseverance he must possess in the highest degree. There is no stone which a truly curious person will leave unturned, in order to obtain a desired piece of intelligence. Sheba performed a tedious pilgrimage, merely to get a sight of King Solomon in all his glory. Actæon encountered a miserable death, to learn what sort of stuff a goddess was made off; or, probably, to ascertain whether she was as great a prude as she pretended. One woman jammed herself into a clock-case, to surprise the secret of the Freemasons; and many a man, and many a woman too, have sacrificed the happiness of their lives, for the pleasure of satisfying themselves, that they were — how shall we express the idea? — entitled to a divorce.

Another quality essential to the curious is courage. As all the world have something to conceal, all the world have their hands set against him who would penetrate their secret; and kickings and cuffings innumerable are the reward of that patriotism, which would make itself a sufficient substitute for Momus's glass-window. The melancholy fate of the benevolent chamberlain, Polonius, who took such a kind-hearted interest in the affairs of his

master, would afford an instance strongly in point, if such instances were not too common to need quotation. Many a curious eye has been lost by a wound inflicted through a key-hole; and many an ear has been destroyed by an explosion of gunpowder blowing the handle of a lock into its porches.

From all this it may be concluded, that he who desires to live in a whole skin, should not be of too prying a disposition.

Curiosity demands likewise in its exercise no ordinary degree of forbearance. Listeners, it is believed, seldom hear much good of themselves. It frequently costs the curious incredible efforts of face and temper to conceal the knowledge they have surreptitiously obtained, of other people's opinions to their disadvantage; and to avoid the practical bull of the Irishman, who, when a man in a coffee-house, writing to his friend, told him, "I shall say no more, for there is a d——d impudent Paddy looking over my shoulder," gave him the lie, and knocked him down, to prove that he was innocent of the fact.

In addition to these various moral excellences, great intellectual endowment is necessary to the gratification of curiosity. It is not alone by the use of the senses, that men arrive at the knowledge of hidden truths. Quickness in seizing upon hints accidentally dropped, dexterity in dovetailing particulars individually insignificant, and a promptitude of induction to make the most of those lights,

which must transpire in spite of the extremest caution, will alone extort the truth, when any pains are taken to keep a matter concealed.

Whoever has read Monk Lewis's pretty story of "My Uncle's Garret-window," will at once understand the meaning and value of this hint. By the exercise of vast powers of combination, and a happiness of conjectural criticism, worthy of the brightest days of the "slashing Bentleys," the hero of this tale was enabled, in the confinement of the above-mentioned observatory, to evolve a complicated intrigue, from the scanty but indubitable indications of what was passing in the opposite house.

In further illustration of the excellence of curiosity, due mention must be made of the various great public functionaries, high in station, and venerable in character, with whom its indulgence is strictly *ex officio*. Perhaps the most curious persons on the face of the earth are the going judges of assize, who interest themselves in all the concerns of a county in which they are utter strangers; and leave their snug chambers and commodious mansions in London, for the purpose of prying into the conduct of men whose modesty induces them to avoid by every artifice such publicity. They will spend whole mornings in scrutinising little traits of character, and clearing up little anecdotes, respecting the veriest *canaille;* and they ask the most perplexing and disagreeable questions, from the most respectable persons that come before them,

with as much coolness and gravity, as if they were the born heirs of a note of interrogation, and as if the world was made for no other purpose, than to satisfy their demands. So far do they carry this matter, that they do not scruple to shut up twelve of the best men of the county in a box, detaining them from their lawful occupations, merely to obtain their opinion of any trifle that may happen to be in dispute. The fatal consequence of this official curiosity is to place many unhappy persons in the most trying situations; and they have been known to be the death of a great many of the subjects, whom they have submitted to this cruel and harassing process.

Next to the judges, the members of the legislature are noted for their tendency to pry. These last are in the daily habit of forming themselves into committees for instituting inquiries, often exceedingly provoking, into other people's affairs. One day they will have a list of the fees you take in your office; another time they insist upon your telling how many promissory notes you have issued; and then, again, they must needs know at what price your farmers have sold their wheat. There are cases in which their curiosity will descend as low as a yard of ribbon, or a pint of port; and if you refuse to part with your secret, they will set a man with a black rod upon you, whose insinuating manners and persevering attentions will soon inveigle you into a change of opinion.

There are, at all times, a certain number of the

members of that honourable corps who take manifest pride and pleasure in asking disagreeable questions of Her Majesty's Ministers; who, in revenge, exert all their ingenuity in balking this curiosity, either by a direct refusal to answer, or by so framing their replies, as to shut out precisely the information sought for. For the same reason, ministers have, by a long practice of evasion, enabled themselves to render the King's or Queen's Speech a model of cryptology, and a perfect type of the anti-didactic.

In this they are nothing to be blamed. The best things become mischievous by abuse; and curiosity exercised, not for obtaining information, but for embarrassing the servants of the crown, is very troublesome, and of dangerous example; and therefore worthy of rebuke. To what end is the Minister a member of the Privy Council, if his thoughts and actions are to be as much *publici juris*, as Privy Gardens?

But while thus chary of their own secrets, "they of the council" are not the less curious after those of every body else. Witness the sums annually expended in secret service, both at home and abroad, and for the most part distributed among that honourable and useful class of persons invidiously called spies. In the foreign cabinets of the continent, this curiosity is carried to such a pitch, that almost in every house one or more observers are employed in reporting every thing that is said or done within its walls: while to every post-office is attached a separate depart-

ment, exclusively occupied in counterfeiting seals, and opening the letters of unsuspicious correspondents.

Another set of public functionaries, of whom curiosity may be predicated in a high degree, are the very respectable officers of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise: a man cannot import a pint of brandy, or make a pound of soap or of candles, but they must know the reason why; and a farmer cannot take a ride by moonlight on the coast, without having his meditations disturbed by the scrutiny of their water guard.

It would, however, be extremely unfair to blame this indiscretion in the subaltern officers of the state, when the Lord Chancellor himself sets them so tempting an example. The Chancellor is, perhaps, the most curious person in his Majesty's dominions; and it is probably for this reason that he carries the seals with him, wherever he goes, as a memento of that secrecy which should accompany the prying of a man of honour. The whole time of this great dignitary is scarcely sufficient to read the answers to questions he is perpetually putting, to the right and to the left, in season, and out of season, to all persons who are unfortunate enough to come within the sphere of his authority. So inveterate is this his habit, that he will permit any man who likes to supply him with interrogatories, for the mere pleasure of forcing some poor devil to put his answer into court: an amiable weakness, of which the cruellest advantage may be taken, by

putting questions at once, personal, offensive, and groundless, and at war with common sense, truth, and decency; and this, too, by individuals who have no more to do with the Chancellor, or the matter in hand, than with the great Mogul.

One of the principal occupations of this official, is listening to endless details of private life; inquiring whether people read improper books; whether they teach their children the catechism, or the Child's Guide to the Gallows, or the like. There is, in fact, no department in life, to which a Chancellor's curiosity will not extend. He dabbles in medicine; and is always suspecting that his friends are mad: and when he has, with infinite pains, established the fact, he insists on having a minute account of how the poor man is treated, and how his money is spent, to the last farthing. He affects, also, to be a great judge of literature; and he will go out of his way to stop the printing of any book that he hears has in it what he calls heterodoxy. In this, too, he is the more perverse, because, while he restrains the owner of the copy, he gives full leave to any pirate who can get hold of the MS. to do his worst.

The Chancellor is also an amazing connoisseur of music, and will inquire whether a fiddler stole the music of a song, or got it "all out of his own head." As keeper of the King's conscience, the Chancellor must also be curious in theology; and the world has not yet forgotten one Chancellor, so tenderly scrupulous on this point, that he would not

admit any man to serve his master in the meanest office, who could not satisfy him as to his knowledge and faith in the Thirty-nine Articles.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is another asker of impertinent questions, who keeps curiosity in countenance by his practises. He cannot pass a house without stopping to count its windows; he is constantly inquiring how many equipages, servants, and horses his friends keep, whether they are fond of sporting, and whether they are single or married? So frankly does he indulge in these indiscretions, that he openly keeps in every parish one or more questionists, for the express purpose of obtaining the most exact information concerning such particulars. He makes it a boast, that the proudest lord of the land cannot hire a pair of posters, or shoot a brace of partridges, without his knowledge of the fact. Once he took a frolic of knowing how many persons wore watches, and whether they were gold-mounted or not. At another time he counted the powdered heads, till people got frightened, and combed out the farina, to the great and lamentable increase of Jacobinism in the land. Another year he must needs know how much his neighbours had for pocket-money; and whether a man lived by begging, borrowing, or stealing.* But as few people cared to reply

* Horne Tooke, when told by the Income Tax Commissioners that his visible expenditure exceeded the income he had returned (under £60 per annum), and was asked to explain the fact, replied, that people who exceed their means,

fairly to such ticklish questions, he was, after a while, advised by his friends to refrain from putting them any more.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer is precisely the last man entitled to indulge in such fancies, because he is always extravagantly jealous of the curiosity of others; and when obliged to lay his accounts, as in duty bound, before the public, he has often taken special care so to confuse the items, that not one man in a thousand could make out, whether his income exceeds or falls short of his expenditure.

Questioning is not, however, confined to official dignitaries. Lawyers and physicians are great questionists; and the clergy are not less curious concerning the agricultural interests of their parishioners. The first nobles of the land take in certain Sunday papers, that they may gratify a prurient curiosity for scandal; and the whole tribe of would-be aristocrats among the middle classes devour the "Morning Post" and "Court Journal," to learn how the royal family and nobility pass their time, and to obtain an insight into circles to which they can never penetrate in person.

The gentlemen of the Stock Exchange, too, live only from one story to another, and are miserable, if "a great man's butler looks grave," * without

may contrive to live by begging, borrowing, or stealing; and he left them to decide for themselves, on which of these resources he depended.

* Murphy's "Upholsterer."

their knowing why. Accordingly, they keep the high roads of Europe alive with their expresses, which ply with more regularity and speed than the king's messengers. To be sure, they are not always very scrupulous about the truth of the results of their research. They are metaphysicians enough to be aware, that truth is only "what all men believe;" * and, provided a lie be accredited, it answers their purpose as well as the purest matter of fact.

There is a very respectable class of persons, who are greatly solicitous to ascertain your precise notions concerning the Apocalypse; and to know whether you read your Bible; and whether you employ the lights of commentary, or reject them, in your biblical lucubrations. There was, not long ago, also another set, who were seen mounted upon lampposts, to peep into their neighbours' windows, and learn whether they shaved themselves, or employed a barber on a Sunday morning; and there are still many who cannot find leisure to go to church themselves, in their intense anxiety to discover who smoke pipes, and drink ale, in the time of divine service.

Society, in short, may be considered as one vast system of espionage, and the business of every man is not only with the actions, but with the very thoughts of all his neighbours. The parliament, therefore, is properly designated as the grand in-

* "Diversions of Purley."

quest of the nation; and every assemblage of men, from a county aggregate meeting, to a coroner's inquest, may be considered as a committee for investigating whatever is, or may be.

In no respect does a mere man approach nearer to the nature of the immortal gods, than in becoming a participator in their knowledge of human affairs; and on this account the situation of kings is singularly enviable, for they are ever fond of gossip, and have always a plentiful supply prepared for their gratification. Napoleon employed a double set of spies to watch each other, and, with all the great interests of Europe on his hands, he found time to dive to the bottom of every love intrigue in his court and army.

These things being considered, can we sufficiently laud our fortunes in being born in an age, in which the whole globe lies open to our researches, and new centres of civilization are preparing in the most distant wilds, to enlarge the objects of research?

Nor is it a less matter, that while the geographical globe expands, as it were, under our searching glances, the world of science exhibits a still ampler increase. The discovery of the mysteries of phrenology, more especially, is a cause for intense gratulation, since it is the shortest of all methods for arriving at every species of secret. A man possessed of this science is like a gamester who plays with marked cards; he sees at a glance his antagonist's game; and he reads his most secret

thoughts, transferred from the *sanctum* of his brain, and rendered palpable upon his integuments. With the dissemination of this truly "useful knowledge," simulation and dissimulation will be done away with, as superfluous and unavailing; and curiosity will have a field for its indulgence, which nothing but a revival of Louis XIV.'s great wigs can close—and that would be a resource too expensive for common use.

Awaiting the fulness of time for the full dissemination of phrenological science, it might not be amiss to favour the public appetite for the knowledge of little things, by the establishment of a royal society for the encouragement of the moral and social Periwinkles, and the Tradescants of ethical rarities, where papers might be read on all the departments of anecdote, and archives be kept of those petty transactions, which biographers overlook, and historians disdain. The presidents of such a society might be chosen, alternately, from the two classes of saints, and blue-stockings, as that of the other royal society used to be from the naturalists and mathematicians—a maiden lady in advanced life always having the preference. A certain portion of every sitting might be occupied with reading and commenting on the satirical novels of the day, and determining, for the benefit of posterity, the precise heroes of their *inuendo*.

The society should have, of right, a copy of all parliamentary returns; an annual lecture might be founded for the perpetual discovery of the au-

thor of Junius, for identifying "the iron mask," and for recovering the lost "Pleiad;" but, above all, there should be a standing committee of blanks and asterisks, to illustrate the fashionable intelligence of the London papers, to chronicle crim cons, and to preserve the annals of the police-offices, with the names of the parties in full.

It is, however, unnecessary to enter into details: establish the society, and the instinct of prying will soon find the fit sphere for its activity. The Inquisition, or the Society for the Suppression of Vice, might be taken as the models for its course of procedure.

MILTON'S HOUSE.

ENGLAND, which has produced the three greatest poets of the modern world, is singularly deficient in poetical nationality—a noble quality, distinct from egotism—a quality that awakens reverence for sites hallowed by the memory of compatriot genius, and consecrates every spot reminiscent of events influential on a people's greatness.

In England, genius has few shrines erected in the public imagination, through the medium of material landmarks commemorating its passing existence, and identifying the scenes of its splendid and beneficent exertions. Shakspeare, Milton, and Byron—each the bright star of his cotemporary galaxy—are illustrations of the proposition. Neglected, or persecuted, or blighted while living, in death their dwelling on earth is marked by no tablet; no mausoleum (the receptacle of their ashes) rises beneath the fretted roof of the national Pantheon. Shakspeare was buried at Stratford; Milton in St. Giles's, Cripplegate (the very stone which marked the hallowed spot having been removed,

and never replaced;*) while the 'bier of Byron passed the towers of Westminster Abbey, on its way to the parish church of a remote village. In one age, a Dean and Chapter of Westminster deemed the name of the inspired author of the "Paradise Lost" a profanation to the repository of regal and prelatical greatness: it was declared by Dr. Spratt to be "too detestable to be read (even incidentally) on the walls of a building dedicated to devotion."† In another age, the same authorities refused to Byron an inscription in that "corner," where the poets of England are huddled together in a petty space, and overshadowed by the monuments of women, who lived without character, and of men who died without distinction.‡

* This injury was compensated through the liberality of the late Mr. Whitbread, at whose expense a bust, by Bacon, of the great poet, was erected in the church.

† The Dean and Chapter of Westminster were more liberal to the memory of Caxton. On being applied to by the Roxburghe Club for leave to erect a tablet in the Abbey to *him, whose works issued from the Sanctuary of Westminster* in the reign of Edward IV., they replied, by the pen of the former Dean's son, that a tablet to *the late Mr. Caxton* would not be objected to, for which they would consider the price. (See "Athenæum," No. 324.)—Oh! this price to the pit, box, and gallery of Westminster Abbey!

‡ More than one heroine of the drama, not quite as exemplary for virtue and unblemished character as the Farrens, Siddons, Bruntons, and other estimable actresses of the present age, have found "snug lying in the Abbey." Mrs. Oldfield, the public mistress of Mr. Mainwaring and of General Churchill, was laid in state in the Jerusalem Chamber. Her

Shakspeare owed the resuscitation of his fame to an actor, like himself; he owed, also, to that actor the highest honours paid to his memory.

But what have the university-bred men of England, or its "most thinking" people, done to preserve from ruin the dwelling-place of him who has raised the literary character of England to unrivalled eminence? What has been done for the house at Stratford, which, like that of Loretto, should be enshrined in marble, and gemmed with the votive offerings of the intellectual world? If that house still exists, if the identical chimney-corner is preserved, by whose hearth the fresh smelling forest scenery of "As you like it"—the joyous wit of Falstaff—the philosophy of Hamlet—the poetry and passion of Macbeth and Romeo, were probably first conceived and embodied—by whom has the fane been rescued from destruction? By a poor woman, to whose sordid cares it is abandoned, and who derives a pittance from the contributions of foreigners, who crowd, as pilgrims, to the Mecca of English genius, to offer that homage, so scantily bestowed at home.

And where stand the dwellings of Milton? Is the house, in which he wrote his glorious "Defence for the people of England," and his treatise on

funeral, splendidly "got up" in Westminster Abbey, with permission of the Dean and Chapter, was attended by the principal nobility of the land, "some of whom were her pall-bearers."—See "Leigh Hunt's London Journal," a delightful periodical.

'The likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church," unknown to the English people—unknown to the church reformers of England? Does no inscription of national respect emblazon its walls, does no column rise in its gardens? Has no literary institution purchased and preserved it, as a monument of the great and stirring times it recalls; and does it stand unrevered and unvisited by the "curled darlings of the nation," who flock to Weimar to worship at the shrine of Goethe, or search every corner of Germany for literary localities, to record in the overladen Magazines and Annuals, the whereabouts of sickly sentimentalists and dreaming metaphysicians?

It was not always thus. Even in the darkest hour of Milton's adversity, when the untiring vengeance of the Stuarts thirsted for his blood,* and

* The Duke of York, in the hey-day of his honours and greatness, went to satisfy a malignant curiosity, by visiting Milton in his own house. He asked him if he did not regard the loss of his sight as a judgment for his writings against the king. Milton replied, calmly, "If your highness thinks calamity an indication of Heaven's wrath, how do you account for the fate of the king, your father? I have lost but my eyes—he lost his head."

On the Duke's return to court he said to the King, "Brother, you are greatly to blame that you don't have that old rogue Milton hanged."

"What!" said the King, "have you seen Milton?"

"Yes," answered the Duke, "I have seen him."

"In what condition did you find him?"

"Condition! why he is old, and very poor."

"Old and poor," said the king, "and blind, too—you are

his timid, ungrateful, and prostrate countrymen abandoned him to his fate, his house was a shrine to illustrious foreigners, to whom he was still the object of regard and veneration, in England. If, in the reign of Cromwell, the Latin secretary of state had shared with the Protector the homage of continental visitors, in the hour of his danger and desolation, the eminent of all countries flocked to his deserted house in Bread Street, with a feeling of almost religious veneration, as the birthplace of the defender of the British republic.

In 1652, when Milton was at the summit of his genius, his fame, and his prosperity, he removed to his residence in Petty France, which he occupied till the Restoration. "It was a handsome house" (says the best of his biographers), "opening into St. James's Park, adjoining the mansion of Lord Scudamore." It was also a garden-house, such as the imaginative love to occupy, and all within its view was poetical and picturesque, for it stood in the time-honoured dominions of the Abbots of Westminster, and commanded the towers of the halls of the Tudors. In this house Milton wrote that splendid answer to the hireling Salmasius, the paid defender of prelacy, royalty, and Charles, in which he first propounded the axiom, that political power by right emanated from the people, for whose good it should be exercised, and for whose

a fool, James, to have him hanged—it would be doing him a service. No: if he is poor, old, and blind, he is miserable enough in all conscience; let him live."

benefit it may rightfully be resumed. Here, too, amidst many other products of his full and teeming mind, he struck out, and nearly completed the most glorious of all known poems, his "Paradise Lost." This house still remains, but remains unhonoured, save by a few of the working class, who live and labour in its neighbourhood—the class who are educating themselves—the class who gathered round the poet's grave, when, in 1792, it was opened, "when the people came from all quarters for a sight of his bones; and happy was the man who became possessor of any portion of the sacred relics." *

This house, whence Milton dates so many of his letters and works,† in whose gardens he received so many illustrious foreigners, is now no longer "a garden-house," as when he fled from it at the Restoration, to avoid an ignominious death. It is now inclosed in the coarse purlieus of mechanical industry and vulgar bustle.‡ Its once spa-

* Symmons's "Life of Milton."

† Andrew Marvell addresses Milton as "My honoured friend, Jno. Milton, secretary for the foreign affairs, at his house in Petty France, Westminster."

‡ It is No. 9, in York Street, Westminster. The writer of this article visited it. On inquiring at a greengrocer's shop for Milton's house, the mistress knew at once the object of our search, and pointed it out as "next door to the undertaker's." The undertaker too, an intelligent young man, did the honours of the locality with a pleased alacrity, which bespoke his knowledge and regard of the gifted being, who had given the edifice its celebrity. Having charge of

cious stairs are contracted to a steep, narrow flight; and little of the interior remains as it was in the seventeenth century, but an attic, beside whose cavernous chimney Milton is said to have written during the winter, "when his vein was happiest, and from whose elevated casement, hanging over his garden, he must have watched the return of his own favourite spring:—

> Fair season budding sprays, sweet smelling flowers,
> And quite forgot earth's turmoils, spite, and wrong.
> DRUMMOND.

But if the house of the blind republican be thus neglected, where stands the dwelling of the poet of many quarterings? Which of the aristocratic muses of the St. James's Parnassus would venture to point out to the princes and ambassadors of Russia and

the key, he abandoned his work to conduct us through every room; and, after having patiently pointed out what was remarkable in the interior, he returned with us to his own house, to obtain a view of the garden-front—for Milton's garden had been added to that of Jeremy Bentham. In the gable of the house is an almost obliterated inscription, intimating, that "Here lived John Milton, the prince of poets." The philosopher of utility, though proud of the neighbourhood, is said to have been very cautious of pointing it out to his guests, till he had first ascertained that they had no poetical pretensions of their own, having been fairly worn out with the affected raptures and calculated enthusiasm of the disciples of the modern forcing-pump school. A drawing of this house was taken by Mr. Franklin, an ingenious artist, who published, at the period of this visit, a lithography of it. The last occupant was Mr. Hazlitt.

Austria, the mansion of the Italian liberal — of the champion of Greece? There was, indeed, a time, when the house of Byron was not unknown to fame —when Fashion, like a poor petitioner, stood waiting at its threshold, in supplication for admittance —when Love, laughing at surly porters, forced the pass, and fools rushed in, and angels did not fear to tread the luxurious saloons of the modern Alcibiades. But, when the open scorner of cant ceased to keep terms with hypocrisy, the Tartuffes, who could pardon vices in princes, and do homage to royal mistresses, as the givers of all good things, placed the frail young poet under the anathema of fashionable morality, and then he was left "alone on his desolate hearth;" his house, like one marked by the yellow flag of pestilence, was avoided and forgotten; and when its immortal master retired, in disappointment and disgust, from the country he had illustrated, the paternal abbey of Childe Harold would have been demolished and swept away by the greedy hand of speculation, but for the intervention of private sympathy, and school-formed affection. *

If, then, the most thinking people of Europe think the memory of their great poets best embalmed in their own works, and leave to the meridian blood of southern climes, the honouring of

* Colonel Wildman, the favourite schoolfellow of Lord Byron, has made Newstead Abbey a monument of his own taste and liberal spirit, no less than of his devotion to its former illustrious owner.

literary genius in the consecration of its dwellings, they show an equal indifference with regard to their more substantial benefactors. In which of the places of popular resort rise the statues of the philosophers and the statesmen, to whom England is indebted for the earlier lights of science, and the amelioration of its social condition? The statues of Bacon, Hampden, and Sydney—the St. Johns of the dark desert of despotism and ignorance—the illustrious precursors of the reform of all knowledge—present not their intellectual images to animate the popular gaze, and to elevate the popular feelings. Among the many statues of "stout gentlemen" in wigs and armour, with truncheoned hands and best leg foremost, which occupy the aristocratic squares and high places of the metropolis, there beam forth few specimens of the sculptured beauty of mind, which, while it forms a study for art, holds forth a bright example to patriotism, and turns the thought of the lowliest spectator to subjects of high and glorious import.

London, indeed, like Florence, has her Piazza del Gran Duca; the "statue which delights the world" (of Conservatism) rises proudly on its elevated column to challenge popular veneration. There is another statue, too, colossal as the "David" of Michael Angelo of the Loggia Orcagno; but, on whose ponderous shoulders (formed from the cannon of a conquered enemy), the people will never mount, and, like those of Florence, shout into the

ear of despotism, "*Popolo e libertà!*" for the statue in Hyde Park leads to no such associations. But, if, among the idols of party— if, among the images of power and ascendency with which adulation has pre-occupied the public places of the metropolis, a monument to patriotism and to popular virtue has here and there intruded on the public gaze, it has rarely been set up by public acclamation, or by the government of the land; but has been placed by family affection, or dedicated by private feeling. The statue of Fox was raised by the Duke of Bedford.

The same want of imaginative nationality which is marked, in England, by the absence of enthusiasm for literary and intellectual localities, is likewise observable in the oblivion that has fallen over her ancient buildings and historic sites. From Crosby Hall and the Star Chamber,* to the dull, dingy "pouting place of Princes" in Leicester Square, all are forgotten or neglected, preyed on by the decay of time, or overthrown by the recklessness of speculation. Even the recent hot fit of literary zeal and antiquarian activity has barely sufficed to extort as much money as was necessary to restore the edifice where Richard the Third gave his rendezvous to the young widow of his murdered cousin; though that edifice is consecrated alike by architec-

* The Star Chamber, the scene of iniquities under the Stuarts, unsurpassed by the Inquisition, occupied that old gothic house which, till a very recent day, existed to the right of Westminster Hall. It was the last residence of Godwin.

tural beauty and by historic recollections, and endeared by its associations with some of Shakspeare's most splendid pages.

The shores of the Thames, up to the close of the seventeenth century, resembled those of a Venetian lagoon. There, in gothic or in Palladian beauty, rose the patrician mansions of the Howards, the Arundels, the Surreys, the Cecils, and the Villierses, whence princes and ministers issued from beneath the marble porticoes, into their gorgeous barges, amidst trains of badged and liveried watermen, for the courts of Westminster and Whitehall. One only of these splendid dwellings now remains, an historical monument of manners long obsolete, and of a supremacy that has passed away, never again to be asserted at the people's expense; though, in its time, a necessary agency to check the despotism which it overthrew — a despotism on whose ruins it has in vain endeavoured to rear its own oligarchical rule.

When these picturesque and baronial edifices were abandoned by their proprietors, and were swept away, to give place to humbler dwellings, the change was not made in search of air, or space, nor to raise happier models of architectural beauty and accommodation for public imitation. The close and narrow streets, and the mean and cribbed houses, which then succeeded, marked the degradation of all the arts. The genius of the Dutch and German dynasties hung like a fog over the tastes of the nation. The cumbrous but splendid style of the preceding

ages was abandoned, and the metropolis expanded itself over its western environs, on the models of Holland and of Hanover. A tide of phlegm deluged and diluted the blood of the descendants of the bold Norman barons, and dimmed the brilliancy of the profligate, but witty, courtiers of the Stuarts. A Bœotian influence fell upon the arts in England, from which they are even now but slowly recovering. Its poetry was illustrated in Dodsley's collection, its painting in the cocked hats and arms akimbo of the Jervises, and its architecture was a *replico* of formless windows and Dutch gables, modelled strictly after the grandeurs of the *Grossen Heeren Strass* of Amsterdam, and the cold formalities of the Hague.

Schnaps and the pipe accord not with the gorgeous and golden rococoed saloon, the taste of Louis the Fourteenth, and required not the gothic gallery of more ancient times for their enjoyment. The royal patrons of the arts, who (as one of them declared of himself) "hated boetry and bainting," and preferred nothing in Shakspeare to the Lord Mayor in "Richard the Third," did little by their influence and example to promote the ideality of the English temperament: and the English schools, during the first Georges, neither revived the noble fabrics of baronial greatness, nor thought of originating the commodious elegance of a style, which, in the present day, so suits the growing civilization of the people. "I suppose," says Horace Walpole, (writing in the middle of the eighteenth century—

1743,) "we shall revert to York Houses, Clarendon Houses, &c. &c. But from that grandeur all the nobility have contracted themselves, to live in coops of a dining-room, a dark back-room, with one eye in a corner, and a closet," — an accurate, and humorous, description of the paltry structures in the vicinity of Cavendish and Hanover Squares; and of that conservative square, where gas-light was so lately deemed innovation, and train-oil was thought to smell of sound constitutional principle.

It was while standing in devote homage before the monument of Bacon, in the ancient and obscure church of St. Michael, Herts — it was in gazing on the ruin of his own beloved Verulam House, near the palace of Gorhambury, and in wandering among the crumbling remnants of the Abbey of St. Albans, that the subject of the present article developed itself, under the influence of the passing impressions. It was there that a conviction was engendered, that among the agencies of intellectual and political reform, the awakening of a poetic nationality, not only among the people, but among the higher classes, might successfully be employed to revive an ennobling and healthy taste, which, while it reflected on the arts, would raise the moral character of the nation, and supersede that love for the frivolous, the trifling, and the hypocritical, which is the reproach of the literature of the day.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY.

No. I.

"Think what London would be, if the chief houses were in it as in the cities of other countries; and not dispersed, like great rarity plums, in a vast pudding of a country."—*H. Walpole's Correspondence.*

THE dispersion of the historic sites of England over its wide surface has been a cause of their preservation, and has rendered the country interesting and poetical, beyond any other in Europe. The rural districts, and not the great towns and cities, (with the sole exception of London,) are the especial seats of those monumental residences, which are landmarks of the social story of the people, stuck fast, and, as it were, rooted in the very soil. It is there, principally, that language, (the master-key to the secrets of the past,) still labels every glen, stamps every rock, and designates every stream and river, with terms which chronicle by-gone events and persons, beyond the influence of time and accident to efface.

When the Saxons, in the fifth century, driven by want from their German forests, swarmed over the

pleasant and fertile vales of England,* they seem to have utterly destroyed, or to have displaced, both the aboriginal Britons, and the remnant of the scattered and straggling descendants of the Roman conquerors. The face of the country, desolated by fire and by rapine, retained few traces of the nascent civilization, which had scarcely taken root at their advent. With the people, perished their language, as a living tongue, in the land; and England became a mere Saxon camp. The sites which the conquerors then occupied, and the edifices and towns they subsequently erected on them, assumed Saxon appellations; yet, notwithstanding this universal subversion of the British race, the natural monuments of the country, (its rivers and greater landmarks,) preserved, in many instances, their primitive names; and the British "Avon," and the Roman "Castrum," still figure in the Saxon geography.

When that intelligent savage, Egbert, the first English monarch, had reduced the independent provinces of the Heptarchy into one kingdom, and the soil was divided into districts, "for the greater ease of his government," one of these shares, or "shires," the nearest to the infant metropolis, was singularly distinguished by natural beauty, by comparative civilization, and by sites, which, even then,

* "In this century all the nations of the north, as if by common consent, broke loose from their cold inhospitable regions, and came down in vast armies to the warm and plentiful regions of the south."

were historical. The natural advantages of Hertfordshire, "than which," says old Camden, "there is scarce one county in England can show more footsteps of antiquity," were well adapted to the state of society in semi-barbarous times. Its ledge of hills gave shelter,—its magnificent woods afforded fuel and building materials,—its grassy bottoms with their rich pastures,—its queen river,* and tributary streams, abounding in variety of fish, and supplying mills,—its fair valley of Ringtale ("yielding the choicest wheat and barley, such as makes the best mault that serves the King's Court, which caused Queen Elizabeth to boast of her Hitchin grape,")— and its medicinal waters† were peculiarities, which supplied the deficiencies, and met, half-way, the wants of undeveloped humanity.

At the very earliest periods, power had discovered the capabilities of this beautiful region; and the Romans, on their arrival in Britain, found, within its boundary, the first attempt at a city, constructed by the rude hands of the half-naked natives, who had congregated there for defence: an artless hold, defended by "woods, bogs, and

* "The Thame (the most famous river of England) issues from three heads in the parish of Tring, which, uniting at New Mill, cross Buckinghamshire to Thame, in Oxfordshire. There, the river congratulates the Isis; but, both emulating each other for the name, and neither yielding, they are complicated by that of Thamisis."—*Abr. from Chauncy.*

† One on the common near Barnet, another at Northall, and one at Offley, are mentioned by Chauncy.

ditches," deserted in peace, manned in war, and principally used in times of civil dissension of savage against savage, "to put their cattle in for safety."*

Whether this city of "the golden-locked leader" of the Cassi, was the nucleus of the Roman city of Verulam, of which the remains exist to this day, and which is consecrated to eternal fame, by its association with immortal genius, it were useless to inquire. The supposition, however, comports with the assumed antiquity and early attractiveness of the spot. The clear, sweet, and very wholesome air of the province, certainly invited the earliest Saxon Kings to make it the scene of their residence; and there they kept their rude courts, and held their parliamentary councils.† The royal palace of Kingsbury, where Bertolf, King of the Mercians, kept his state, stood "at the west end of the city of St. Alban's, within the walls of the ancient Verulam —the Windsor of the ninth century—as, afterwards, Langley Regis was the Brighton of royal repose, in the time of Henry III.

The fair sites, improved by the Saxon Princes, were not neglected by the Norman invaders: William the Conqueror fell in love with the county of Hertford, seized it into his own hands, and reserving to himself a large part "as the provision of his court," he gave the remainder to his needy, but

* Pennant's Journey from Chester.

† Chauncy.

powerful followers. The successors of the Conqueror, influenced by the same motives, made Hertfordshire the seat of their rural residences, "where they were accustomed to breed and educate their children." Many of the nobility, consequently, "built stately fabricks, pleasant dwellings, and delicious seats, for their own habitations, which were anciently called buries (the Saxon term for dwelling-houses,) and which were mostly lordships." "But since," adds Chauncy, "several of these have lost their lords, and have become now farm-houses."*

The Doomsday Book has preserved the names of those who profited by the Conquest; and they afford a striking contrast with the simple and homely but picturesque Saxon appellations of the lands which were granted to them. "Bushey" had its Lord De la Ware; the "Lea" its Simon de Flambord and Waldrand de Rochefort; and "Hatfield" (*i. e.* Heathfield) its De Fortescue; "Honesdone" its De Montgommeri; while some nameless "*soldat*

* "The English lands William gave in fee to his soldiers, to hold them under such services as he appointed, by right of succession or inheritance, which right was not very common in those days among military tenants; for if they failed in the performance of their duty and service to their lord, they forfeited their estates." The philosophy of despotism was well understood by the Normans, who modelled the law and Government of England on their own, "for all the Judges were Normans, and monks and priests were the counsellors and pleaders that managed causes upon all tryals for the people." —*Chauncy*, vol. i.

heureux" was entered simply as Robert De la Hoo, (a Saxon equivalent for "Hight," in allusion to its elevated position.) The royal "Offley" fell to the St. Legiers; and "the Barleys," "Thornbury," "Coldridges," and "Brockets," gave possessions and honours to many who had none in their native land.

The combinations of one age are, inevitably, destined to give place to those of another; and the "to have and to hold for ever" of the lawyers, like so many other of their fictions, has no warranty from the law of nature. The power of the Norman Barons decreased under the destructive influence of the crusading fanaticism, and of the civil wars of the rival Roses. The descendants of the forresters, huntsmen, falconers, butlers, and other *serventes regis*, diminished in number and in influence; while the posterity of the Saxons, socmen, bordars, cotars,* and villains, the victims and slaves of the feudal system, the performers of "base services," (as all works of utility were then termed,) gradually resumed their forfeited places in society, by the force of those energies, which even slavery could not obliterate. The Saxon physiognomy again appeared in the high places of social and political distinction; while the high arched eyebrow and curled lip (the features of haughty, conscious superiority) were oftener found in monumental

* Bordar, from the Norman-French word *Borde*, a cottage; the term cotar, or cottier, explains itself.

effigies and ancient portraits, than in living originals. Society, in thus becoming less picturesque, became more equalized; and it is scarcely hyperbole to add, that never has England, since the Conquest, been so much England, as in the present day.*

Under the gradual and progressive influence of such causes, the ancient manors and stately mansions of Hertfordshire have slipped from the grasp of the posterity of the Norman nobles, until scarcely a Norman family remained. It is curious to watch the fading away of the De's, Fitz's, and Ville's, from William the Conqueror to Henry IV.; at which period the De Valengies, De Magnavilles, the De Veeres, the De Lucis, the Montfichets, the Belcampos, and other lords of the soil, and of the liberties of the people, had given way to the Braybrookes, Swinebournes, Engelfields, and Pendragons, &c. &c. Under Edward IV., many of the broad lands of the country were dominated by the Clays, Burlies, Cornburghs, Sturgeons, and Woods. Under Henry VIII., church reform and confiscation added to the change. The ancient manors of Goreham, Sandridge, and the Priory of the Prey, (all parcels of the ancient "honour" of the monks of St. Alban's,) then fell to the lot of Ralph Rowlet, of Saxon descent. The Brockets, Bacons, Plummers, Sadlers, and Millers, came in under Elizabeth: and the Brands, Bakers, Lambs, and the

* All the rudiments of English liberty will be found emanating from the Saxon spirit and institutions; the Norman legislator was of a different race and temper.

owners of other old Saxon names, were found in possession of the fair manors of Hertfordshire, under the Georges. Beauchamp, the fief of the De Montgommeris, was granted to the Taylors and Turners; and "the stately pallace of Kingsburry, where the Saxon Kings delighted much, and where their nobles and officers so often resorted, as to become a burden and a charge to the abbot and monks of St. Albans," was sold to one John Cox. Merchant-tailors and mercers, and linen-drapers, from the City of London, became lords of those manors, which once gave despotic privileges to "the gentlemen" of Rollo's creation;

And thus the whirligig of time brings round its revenges.

Of all these progressing stages of society, the monumental fragments are scattered over the soil, to which they have given such an historical and poetic interest. Of these, the grandest, the most beautiful, and powerful, stands the Abbey of St. Alban's—like the fragment of an illuminated manuscript, telling of the moral and pictorial development of man, of his ignorance, his knowledge, his power, and his weakness.

In the early history of England, when all might be summed up in blood and massacre, the Monastery of St. Alban's was founded and endowed by Offa, a murderer of immortal memory, who, by this penitential propitiation, delivered to posterity the record of his crimes, while he unconsciously

forwarded that great reform, which began through the resistance of the church to feudal violence.

Monastic life had been founded under the influence of fear. Adopted as a protection by the persecuted Christians of Egypt, who retired into the desert for safety and repose, the life grew into repute for its own sake, spread through the Greek Church, passed into the Latin, was early embraced in France, and from France was imported into Britain, where its adaptation to the circumstances of the times ensured it a rapid and wide prevalence.

When St. Augustine arrived in England with his forty monks, at the close of the sixth century, Glastonbury and Bangor were already flourishing establishments. The latter had grown up under persecution; having, at its foundation, been taxed with a spirit of innovation by the Druids, whom it attacked in their own powerful seat. The Druidical hierarchy raised the cry that their church was in danger; they accused the new brotherhood of being Christian philosophers — overturners of the social order of human sacrifices, and of the orthodox worship of the miseltoe—the corrupters of the youth of the nation (the old church-and-state cry against Socrates.) Notwithstanding this denunciation, or rather, in consequence of it, the monastery throve, and the monks became exceedingly numerous; but, in after years, persecution was more effectual in its mischievous activity: for the monks, siding with the British people against their Saxon invaders, and maintaining their own usages against the au-

thority of the Roman bishops, Ethelfred, instigated, as it is said, by St. Augustine,* massacred no less than 1200 of them; an event which was soon followed by the ruin of the establishment.

Its great rival and cotemporary (Glastonbury) more prudent, or less ardent in the cause of reform, survived for nearly seven hundred years, and fell only with the universal wreck, at the Reformation.

The endowment of an abbey that was to surpass both — the Abbey of St. Alban's — is said to have arisen from the miraculous discovery, by King Offa, of the body of St. Alban (the first British martyr); when a shining light over Verulam directed the monarch to the tomb. The royal penitent having dedicated his manor and palace of Winslow, in Hertfordshire, to the foundation, says Newcome, "thought proper to call together his nobles, prelates, and chief personages, to take council on the further execution of his pious design; and it was then determined that the King should in person go to Rome,† to solicit leave of the Pope, and procure

* "It is probable that the Monastery of Banchor was found by Austin and his monks to be adverse to their plan and institution, since it is plain that Austin made pretensions to an authority unknown to the British clergy; and that the latter had never acknowledged a dependance on any foreign Pontiff, as head . . . . And this enmity against the British clergy instigated the King of the East Angles, by the persuasion of Austin, to extirpate Banchor."—*Newcome's Hist. of St. Alban's*, p. 21.

† An enterprise of vast danger and difficulty in those rude and troubled times.

the desired privileges for his foundation. The King proceeded, in the full intention to make his endowment as far transcend all other monasteries, as St. Alban had surpassed all other martyrs. The Pope, with great commendations of the King's zeal and piety, grants all his requests; and Offa, in return, granted for the use of the English school at Rome, that Peterpence, or one penny per family, should be collected throughout his dominions; * and having made confession to the Pope of all his crimes, and received a conditional absolution, he departed with a devout benediction." — [Hist. of St. Alban's, p. 26.]

The first Abbot of St. Alban's was "one Willigod," who ascended the abbatial chair in 794: the last was Cardinal Wolsey, who descended from it in 1523. What duration for a system, and what a fall! By how many fluctuations of power and of opinion was that system (for centuries deemed infallible) reduced to its ultimate powerless decay! How many uses had sunk into abuses, not merely by becoming corrupt, but by their growing inaptitude to the wants and opinions of after-times. The life and fall of the last immortal abbot is but a type of the great abuses on which he rose, and by which he fell. Bishop, legate, abbot, cardinal, statesman, philosopher, and irresponsible minister (responsible at least to his master alone), his story is a brief abstract of the times in which he lived, when

* The Popish model of our Evangelical penny subscriptions against Popery.

power, wound up to its highest possible pitch, broke by the excess of its own tension, and civil rights began to supersede the despotism of church and state. The crowned and bloated monster, the prostrator of all ties and sympathies, the English Nero, the guardian defender of the Catholic faith, who took to himself the merit of reform, was but the passive agent of events, over which the fluctuation of his impulses exercised no permanent control. He could cut off heads, but he could not obliterate ideas. The Reformation emanated not from his decree, nor is it justly reproachable with his vices. It existed in the minds of the people long before it served the purposes of his brutal passions. It is the nature of reform, as of flame, to ascend: the wisest of sovereigns can but direct, the worst cannot extinguish it.

As a monument, the still beautiful, still splendid, ruin of the Abbey of St. Alban's calls upon the feelings, the philosophy, and the poetical nationality of England to rescue it from approaching destruction.* The church has few other such perfect

* In November Mr. Cottingham, the architect, after a minute survey of the general state of the building, reported that the foundations, walls, and main arches of this magnificent church were in such a substantial state as to last for centuries with a very trifling repair; but that the roofs of the north and south transepts, and the east end of the nave, were extremely insecure; the ends of many of the main timbers being so perfectly rotten as to lose their geometrical bond and dependence on the walls, thereby endangering the whole fabric. The great window of the south transept, and several

relics of its grandeur and influence; art has not many such models of those forms, which seem connected with the imagination, and consecrated to all its most romantic associations.

Will the conservatives of all old things in politics and institutions suffer this beautiful record of the wisdom of their ancestors, this material evidence of their influence, to melt and dissolve away, "like the baseless fabric of a vision?"—Will the extravagant contributors of the public money to erect new churches, afford no mite of their own to secure from utter dilapidation this very old one?—Will not the gentry of the shire, the Saxon gentry, who have recovered the lands of their early forefathers, by the industry and talents of their immediate antecedents, rescue from decay the shrine of St. Cuthbert and "the lady's chapel," where their mothers worshipped; or prevent the tombs of their distant progenitors from being confounded with the dust of unhallowed ground? Even the descendants of the favoured courtiers of Henry the Eighth, who shared so largely in the plunder of the Abbey, are interested in preserving the monument of their own rank and power; and the newest resident on a purchased estate, whose mansion commands a view of the picturesque and beautiful edifice, cannot be indifferent to the permanence of an object from which he derives so much physical enjoyment.

of the minor windows, are also reported to be in a very ruinous state.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY.

No. II.

In the vast and splendid sweep which Philosophy takes over recorded time, from the wondrous memoranda registered in fossil forms under the earth, the last social results of progressing reform, how many phenomena, influential on the destiny of man, arrest her attention, as marked and prominent in their agency, though mistaken and misrepresented by shallow learning, or by interested prejudice! Among these, the monastic institution —the most picturesque and most singular of the several elements of civilization, stands conspicuously forth. Commencing in the fourth century, and terminating (to all effective purpose) in the sixteenth, it has, during twelve hundred years, been an object of exaggerated praise, and of unmerited censure, without having been duly appreciated, either in its causes or its effects, save by a gifted few, whose judgments have left scarcely any permanent traces on public opinion.

Arising out of the wants of society—the result of a necessity over which individual volitions hold

no control — the monastic institution, like many others, terminated, by its protracted conservation, in abuse. It began with a few only—men, whose timid nature and intellectual temperament led them to leave the scene of universal carnage, during that epoch of transition, when a worn-out and corrupted civilization was relapsing into anarchy and barbarism, and when new races were founding empires upon the ruins of all that had once been morally grand and physically powerful.

Professing the new philosophy, founded by that Divine Reformer, whose agency was so human, they stole from a sanguinary contest with the feeble conservatives of Jupiter, or the northern propagandists of a coarser, but honester, paganism; and, flying alike from the worst despotism of the worst of the Cæsars, and from the devastating persecution of the savage invaders, they escaped to deserts, where safety invited to enjoyment, and nature solicited meditation. Through the experience and example of a few cautious anchorets, the practice became general; and men, called devout, but who represented philosophy as well as religion, continued in greater numbers to separate themselves from the world, and to live by the culture of the earth, and the labour of their hands.

From the anchoretism of the desert to the seclusion of the monastery, the step was short; and monkish communities, a solecism in language, though consequent in the logic of fact, afforded a

new era in the history of the church. The usage seems to have rapidly spread through the East; for though, through the ravages of the Saracens, and the conquests of Mahomet, the history of the Eastern and African churches is comparatively but little known, the multitude of monasteries, which flourished among the paradises of oriental solitude, is a fact incontestably established.

It was, however, in the west of Europe that monachism took the firmest root, and amalgamated the most perfectly with the habits and institutions of the people, with whom it was in great esteem. In this, as in most other instances, the popular instinct was right; for, while among the Asiatics the institution continued to be almost exclusively ascetic and religious in its objects, circumstances had prepared for its devotees in the west, functions of a more worldly, and, at the same time, a more useful character. The masses, accordingly, who most immediately participated in the good thus effected, were not slow to perceive the advantage, and to revere the knowledge of a class, which (placed between themselves and their military oppressors) exercised a mysterious power over the feudal chief, directed by the closest sympathies with the miserable vassal.

Monachism also opened a gate to the ambition of the low-born, and a refuge from unremunerated toil, to those of gentle disposition, or of a frail constitution; it met the wishes, and soothed the sufferings of the people, who continued steadily to

adhere to it, as long as its agency remained an item in the inventory of popular wants. By the seventh century, monasteries of both sexes abounded in England; at first, as appendices to the episcopal see, and in immediate vicinity to the cathedral. Subsequently, monachism acquired a separate, though a dependent existence; and, at length, a divergence of interests, and a rivality for power and for influence, placed the regular and the secular clergy in a position of nearly open hostility.

While the "busy meddling priest," the feudal bishop, the warrior hierarch, the exacter of tithes, were regarded by the lower classes with fear and with aversion, the monks (themselves supported by endowments, or by voluntary contributions) fed, clothed, and cured the necessitous and the oppressed, and taught the industrious those arts, by which society exists, and is held together. While the dignitaries of the church shared the councils of kings, associated with nobles, and joined with both in the plunder of the many, the monks were of the people and with the people, sharing their sentiments, sympathizing with their sufferings, and associating with their pleasures. The secular clergy urged on their hearers the necessity of a holy life; the monks preached a penitent death; while the greater "joy of heaven over the one repentant sinner" furnished a text, which filled the coffers of the monastic houses, and proved that their inmates were deeply imbued with that knowing

acquaintance with human nature, which men only acquire who live with men.

Thus possessed of the secret of governing through their passions those with whom so little can be effected through their reason, they acquired that immense accumulated wealth, which ultimately enabled them to withdraw from all subjection to their diocesan, and to surpass him in external splendour, as in moral and political influence. In 1514, the mitred abbots, who took their seats in the House of Lords, amounted to twenty-eight, while the bishops were but nineteen; and their houses furnished not only the law courts with officers, but sent forth ambassadors abroad, and supplied men for the highest employments at home. Teachers, mediators, chroniclers of the past, and historians of their own times, they held the mastery over the minds, fame, and salvation of the people.

Notwithstanding all that has been advanced concerning the ignorance and the idleness of some particular orders, it is clear that the institution could not have gained its influence with the masses, nor could its members have obtained such weight with the governing classes, without the possession of some lever, with which to move the world: that lever was the monopoly of knowledge. Without pausing to estimate the precise nature of the learning possessed by the monks, it is clear that it gave them a decided advantage over the illiterate military corps, who disdained it. Whether they ex-

erted their sharpened intellects in deluding mankind, and cheating them of their wealth, or in obtaining the administration of secular affairs, political and administrative, they were equally indebted to the monopoly of learning; but when, either in their benevolence, or their short-sightedness, they gave the key of knowledge to the laity, they destroyed the foundation of their order, long before the spelful word of Reformation had sealed the ruin of the church's power, and given supremacy to civil influence and to the authority of parliament.

On the dissolution of the abbeys in England, their landed property was found to amount to one-third of the soil; the most improved, best drained, cleared, and cultivated portion of the kingdom. At this period, the Abbey of St. Alban's stood unsurpassed and unrivalled. Its sumptuous abbot had houses in London "for the safe and honourable abode of himself and his successors, and of his monks, who might have business there." He had also his marine villa at Yarmouth, not only to enjoy the invigorating sea-breeze, but for the more practical purpose of "laying up salten fish at proper seasons, to the unspeakable benefit and comfort of the abbey." They had estates, priories, cells, and other lucrative dependencies, in various counties: of these, Belvoir, Beaulieu, Hatfield-Peverel, and others, still retain traces of their ancient grandeur. But in Hertfordshire were situated their favourite villas and "stations," where they withdrew to lux-

urious retirement, from the state and magnificence of the abbey, from the solitary dignities of "the Dais," and the necessity of receiving those most troublesome of all visitors, kings and queens, and their idle train of parasites and courtiers.* There, accompanied by a few "familiars and counsellors," (called, in the humility of monkish pedantry, their *Bajuli,*) the epicurean abbots loved to retreat, for the purposes of literary leisure, of ease, or of enjoyment—to lose the superior in the man, or to replace the fawning dependent by the confidential friend. These are the villas which now form the summer (or rather the winter) retreats of some of the leading aristocracy of our own days—the stoutest sticklers for the inviolability of church property; who (if their new-fangled principle had prevailed at the Reformation) would probably have been, as their ancestors were, ere they drew their wealth from the church's plunder—the waiters upon times and seasons, "the pickers up of unconsidered trifles" in the ante-chambers of the great, too proud to work, but not "ashamed to beg."

* Edward IV. "frequented this part of his kingdom, by repeated visits to his relations and friends; for at this time his mother, Cicely, the old Duchess of York, had her residence at Berkhampstead, and lived there till the middle of Henry VII.'s reign. The Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence abode often at the royal Palace of King's Langley. George Nevil, the splendid Archbishop of York, resided at More Park, and the King frequently honoured this place with his residence. The Lord Hastings, Chamberlain to the Court under Edward, dwelt near this abbey, as appears by his transaction with Wheathampstead."—*Newcome's Hist.*

The Reformation of the Anglican Church was made by the people of England; the mal-appropriation of its revenues was the act of the king and of his courtiers. The work began under Henry VII., who found his great state lawyers, Empson and Dudley, ready to justify his exactions; and his two favourite prelates, Morton and Fox, equally prompt to advise, and to sanction them. It was consummated by Henry VIII., who turned the wealth, which thus came into his administration, not to the amelioration of his people's condition, nor to the advantage of their education, but to the increase of the royal authority, by the formation of a new and devoted aristocracy, of a totally different race from that of the ancient Saxon gentry, or of the bold Barons of the glorious field of Runnymede.

Among the persons who profited the most largely by the occasion, were the immediate favourites of the royal Blue Beard, and the dependents of his unfortunate friends and wives. "He who lived about the time when happened the Reformation," (says one of its historians) "which was the harvest of estates—however lowly his origin, or humble his office, was in the road to fortune, if he had the promptitude to avail himself of it." "For," (says old Naunton, in his amusing life of Sir William Paulet, 1572,) "it argued idleness, if any courtier had his barns empty: and he, Sir Robert Paulet, was a younger brother, and came to court upon trust; where, upon the stock of his wit, he trafficked so wisely, and fared so well, that he got, spent, and

left, more than any subject since the Conquest; and he left, at his death (in 1572,) one hundred and three descendants."

The Church Commissioners of the great reform of the sixteenth century scarcely waited for the cooling of their seals upon their patents, when they commenced the work of devastation; and taking possession of the religious houses, began to pull down and sell the materials, and to alienate their funds and estates; for, adds Newcome, "the new source of riches was so acceptable to the king and his court, that he made no application for subsidy or supply to the Parliament."

While the great sweep of lands and manors was making, the "visitors" and "Church Commissioners," who were sent on their inquisitorial mission to St. Alban's and Godstowe, "to discover the many enormities, not only in the morals, but in the economy and rule of the houses," discovered also other things, that better repaid the trouble of their inquiries. They committed great violence and injustice; robbed and carried off all the plate and precious stones found in some of the houses, and committed great outrages in others; and "as for the goods and moveables, the rich vestments, and splendid ornaments, they were so much the property of the present monks, when their continuity was to cease, and their trust to expire, that, on all principles of justice, they should not have been robbed and spoiled of them; and if the voice of humanity could have been heard, in this general

clamour of avarice and rapine, these moveables should have been sold, and the money reserved for the use of the owners, who were soon to be turned into the wide world, with a very slender pension. But, by the act, all these goods and moveables, together with an amazing quantity of the same from the cathedrals, were carried away by the visitors, and swallowed up by the royal vortex, never to appear or be heard of more." *

Who that has a taste for the toys of antiquity, but must envy the first plunder of the shrines and cabinets of St. Alban's! What rummaging of wardrobes, what forcing of caskets, what copes and robes of rich silk, what ewers of pure silver, and goblets of virgin gold, to be converted into lay dresses, and to decorate convivial bouffets! What gems, plucked from the marble neck of the Madonna—what rings, wrung from the finger of the votive statue of St. Alban! How curious to trace the history, and follow the fate of the holy offerings of one epoch, and the unholy spoliation of another! How many of the fair Conservatives, who now uphold the inviolability of church property, may parade on their persons the remnants of its plunder! The "Lady Anne Tyrell's cup adorned with precious stones," given in the thirteenth century, may have furnished the agraffe that fastens the stomacher of some other Lady Anne in the nineteenth. Lord Thomas of Woodstock's "necklace of gold, adorned

* Newcome.

with saphire stones, and swan expanding its wings," may now compose the star of some "stand-making" Peer; and the necklace "given by Richard II. for the image of the Holy Mother," and the "rich trinkets and holy relics" presented by his father, the Black Prince, may, in the chances and changes of time and events, have come back to the royal toilet, and decorated the person of the most orthodox of Queens.

Of the magnificent, mitred, parliamentary Abbey of St. Alban's, which once dominated the southern part of ancient Verulam and modern St. Alban's, nothing now remains but its portal or gateway, with its beautiful pointed arch above, and paved court beneath—so often trod by the pilgrim feet of votarists of all nations—so often filled with the gorgeous trains of royal guests, and of princely confraternities.

The Conventual Church, however, though but a fragment of the once magnificent pile, attests the grandeur of the whole, and the perfection of ecclesiastical architecture in England, during the middle ages. There are still extant, in the interior, specimens of genuine Saxon architecture, a part of the original building, the rounded arch, the massy tower, and enormous pillar, whose rude but noble simplicity is forcibly contrasted to the elaborated elegance of the gothic style. Screens of the most minute tabernacle-work, pointed arches, feathery shafts, and a profusion of richly-sculptured tracery, display all the characteristic beauty of that most

picturesque and fanciful epoch of the art. The high altar, the after-part of the choir, the chapel of Abbot Rambridge, and that of St. Alban, are the most remarkable. In the latter, once stood a superb shrine of beaten gold, studded with gems, and ornamented with sculpture. To guard the relics of the saint, thus preciously enshrined, a trusty and sturdy monk (the *custos feretri*) was appointed to keep watch and ward in the small wooden gallery still standing near the spot. There are also existing, beneath the fretted roof of this beautiful abbey church, monuments and tombs well suited to revive remote associations with great events, and to awaken a poetic nationality in the most phlegmatic temperament. Of these, the tomb of the Protector Duke of Gloucester, familiarly called the good Duke Humphry (the upright minister of a feeble king and an intriguing queen, one who evinced how hard and how dangerous it is to serve mankind,) stands on the southern side.*

It has been the privilege of this Abbey, and of its historical neighbourhood, to have fascinated the

* The seat of Duke Humphry was the "Weald House." All that remains of this historical edifice is the curious antique farm, at a little distance from Porters, a noble mansion, so called from its occupying the site of the porter's lodge, in the time of the Lord Protector. The chestnut trees, still standing there, are said to have shaded the favourite walk of Duke Humphry. Porters commands a view of the Abbey, and was, when this page was written, the property of Colonel Henry White. Here, it is said, Marshal Wade brought Lord Lovat, on his way to the Tower and the scaffold.

imaginative, and to have lured to its scenes and time-honoured site the high-minded, and the intelligent of all ages. There was a spell hovering over the ruined fragments of ancient Verulam, which led the poetical and the philosophical alike to wander over its site, and to repose within its view. Spenser assumed the character of its presiding genius, to sing its grandeur and melancholy glory:

> "I was that city, which the garland wore
> Of Britain's pride, delivered unto me
> By Roman victory, which it wore of yore,
> Though nought at all but ruins now I be,
> And lie in my own ashes, as ye see.
> Verlame I was: what boots it that I was,
> Sith now I am but weeds and wasteful grass."
>
> *Ruins of Time.*

The wish of Sir Thomas More was to live and die in its neighbourhood;* and Bacon chose its little church of St. Michael for his grave, because the ancient pile arose within the precincts of the walls of Verulam. It is but a short time since the author of these articles stood beside that grave, and before the monument of "the greatest, wisest, [and it may yet be doubted], meanest of mankind." The cicerone of one of the most ancient of British

* Gobions was the patrimonial seat of Sir Thomas More, where he retired with his accomplished family, "when, foreseeing the uncertainty of the King's favour, he prevailed on his Majesty to discharge him from the high office of Chancellor. It was," says Chauncy, "a convenient house, not subject to envy, yet magnificent enough, where he pleased himself with his wife and children."

churches was a little chubby peasant boy, who ran with the keys from a neighbouring cottage, to do the honours by Time and Immortality.

The church of St. Michael, raised in the tenth century, by the sixth abbot, the Saxon Ulfinus, was built of the Roman brick and tile taken from the ruins of Verulam, and founded "for the utility of the little village of St. Alban's, which began to gather about the abbey and church." Low, mean, and simple, it survives in perfect integrity, the splendid and gorgeous fabric to which it was an appendage. Its tithes afforded only the salary of "the cellarer and coquinar," to whom they were assigned by the arbitrary will of the abbot. Its square embattled tower, low spire, and roof, present the simplest, oldest style of Saxon architecture.

During the repair of the church, in 1808, on removing the wainscot from the screen which separated the nave from the chancel, an ancient painting, in distemper, was discovered in the wood-loft, representing the Day of Judgment; a fearful representation of the simple but terror-striking means by which the mind of man was subdued in dark ages. It is miserably executed, and strongly opposed to another specimen of the arts, preserved in the front of the gallery, which is erected against the nave—a fragment of carved oak preserved from the old palace of Gorhambury. It is impossible to conceive a more solemn, simple, time-touched, or sombre temple of religious worship, than this ancient little church, scarcely known beyond its own

immediate neighbourhood. Its fine monumental remains record the remote times when Norman French was the language of the land; and the inscription of

> " John Seacok et Maude sa femme gisunt ici,
> Dieu de leurs ames ait merci,"

was the model of many a memorial of those who, great in their own day, made their offerings to St. Michael, with a fear of the pictured terrors placed before their eyes in the wood-loft.

Such is the obscure receptacle of the remains of one of the greatest men whom England has produced — the prophet of science, the founder of philosophy. The monument of Bacon is finely, but quaintly, executed in white marble. It is, what all monuments should be, a portrait of the person commemorated; and it is endowed with all the peculiarities of dress and manner of the original. There is no wearisome enigma of allegorical allusion, no emblem of temporal grandeur. The figure of Lord Verulam is seated in an easy chair, and reclining in an attitude of perfect bodily indulgence, and intellectual abstraction. There is an air of living, breathing meditation over the countenance, which communicates its gracious calm to the spectator. The dress is minute in all the details which characterize the costume of Elizabeth's and James's day, —the furred robe, the high-crowned hat, the very rosettes in the shoes. The illusion is so perfect, that the immortal original seems to have been re-

moved from his own *cryptoporticus*, in his favourite summer-house in the orchard of Gorhambury, the retreat of his happiest hours, and the object of his most lavish and elaborate cares. This beautiful monument, so little known to the English public, is not a national tribute, but the grateful memorial of a faithful servant, Thomas Meautys, his secretary.

The church of St. Michael, standing perfect at the end of eight hundred years, may triumph over the assault of ages yet to come; and, in times more sober and intellectual than the present, when personal distinction and the great endowments of nature shall not be obscured by the adventitious circumstances of an artificial society, the monument of Bacon may bring many a pilgrim to its foot, and receive that tribute from the nationality of Englishmen, which is incompatible with the narrow views, the sordid pursuits, and the habit of regarding whatever is merely intellectual with fear or with contempt — as dangerous to the stability of social order, or, at best, as "stale and unprofitable,"—the prevailing characteristics of the influential classes in England, in the nineteenth century.*

* Since these papers were put together, for the purpose of forwarding the subscription, it has been filled, and the reparations of the cathedral completed. A fund is, however, still wanting, it is believed, to provide for the continued maintenance of the venerable monument.

RURAL PLEASURES.

Ducere solicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ.

Io credo essere stato ne' più begli
Luoghi di villa, e al guidizio mio,
Gli hanno a far poco, o non nulla . . ."
Capitolo del Adamo Centurioni.

To get through life in the country, one must surely be more or less than man; less, to be satisfied with the lot—more, to endure it with fortitude! I have often tried the experiment, and slaved with all my might and main to endure the ennui, but it would not do. I am not Hercules; and even if Hercules had been sent, by way of a thirteenth labour, to pass six weeks with a country cousin, the Centaur's shirt might have been cut up into blister-plasters; for the god would have died on the next willow, without the aid of that *dignus vindice nodus.*

What folks mean by their "rural pleasures," I never could understand. The "life exempt from public haunt" is good for nobody, but a hermit, or a man hiding from his creditors. Talk indeed of

"tongues in trees"—commend me to the tongues of Mr. Burgess in the Strand; and as for "books in running brooks," they are not to be compared with those of the next circulating library; and then, for the "sermons in stones," to my taste, the Macadamization of Regent Street is a more edifying text for a discourse, than all Stonehenge and the Giant's Causeway put together.

This vaunt of half thinkers, concerning the charms of a country life, is one of those pieces of conventional jargon, with which mankind have agreed to humbug each other; and which, occupying the place of ideas, in the brains of a large number of Englishmen, make portion of the established creed of the community. Unlike, however, to some other portions of the national symbol, there is nothing to be got by upholding it; and therefore it is one cannot help being surprised that it should maintain its ground. When it is considered that there is really no one, having a direct interest in preaching rusticity, except the steam-boat company, the lodging-house keepers of Margate, &c., it becomes difficult to explain the ready credence, which men, otherwise of sound discretion, bestow upon the "flattering error," after such oft-reiterated experience of its fallacy.

Every reader may lay his finger upon, at least, some ten or a dozen families, who for many successive years have tried the spitting over bridges, the picking up of cockleshells, the saunterings, the musings, and the snorings, which make up country

life, till they have been in immediate danger of "dying the death of the bored," and who yet return annually to the same watering places, like a foolish perch to the hook from which he has just escaped—leaving their pleasant, commodious town-houses, in some well wooded and picturesque square, to inhabit the narrow, cribbed, hot, cold, damp, and sunbaked tenements, on a leafless sea-coast. There are but too many, also, who go annually into a voluntary banishment, at Camberwell or Clapham Rise, under the false pretence that London is dreary; though, before they have left town a fortnight, they would give their eyes to be once more in Russell Square.

A hundred years ago, there might, perhaps, have been some excuse for such fancies, some pretext for carrying on the absurd farce of rural simplicity, when cockneys had no other notions of a country life, than such as were to be acquired from the pastoral poets (those impudent impostors), or from boarding-school landscapes worked in chenille, where shepherds play upon pipes instead of smoking them; and where well-fed shepherdesses, taller than the steeple of the adjoining church, squint horribly on their pot-bellied swains; or (surrounded by sheep, the image of poodle dogs, and by the scenery of a China saucer), lay basking amidst eternal sunshine, and never-ending summer.

In times thus ignorant, that men should be found to put as implicit faith in Pope's Eclogues, as in

their Bible, and to make the pleasures of the country a sort of fortieth article of religion, is not so surprising; but now, in the broad glare of intellectual illumination of this *sæculum mirabile*, when a shilling's worth of the Paddington omnibus, or a trip in the steamboat, to Greenwich or to Richmond, can bring the matter to the test of sensation—that such an absurdity should be admitted and committed, fairly beats cockfighting!

There is, it cannot be disputed, a physical sensation, a sort of "pleased alacrity, and cheer of mind," attendant upon the first breath of the pure air of the country, the first glancing over an extensive range of fields, which, on leaving the dusty metropolis, is distinctly agreeable. Granted also (for there is nothing like truth and fairness), that the smell of new-mown hay is sweet, on the cool and refreshing breeze of a June evening; and that the distant bark of a village dog, or the lively song of the nightingale, (why is it called melancholy?) are quite as amiable preparatives to sleep, as "past twelve o'clock," * or the rolling of the

* To those not well read in antiquarian lore, it may be necessary, in explanation of this allusion, to state, that it was the custom of our ancestors to entertain certain functionaries, whilom hight "Charlies," or watchmen, whose duty it was to pass the night in wooden boxes and woollen nightcaps, sleeping for the good of the parish. At intervals, however, they were required to rouse themselves, and to walk through the street, that they might waken the sick people and children, in order to let them know to a minute what o'clock it

fire-engines. Some allowance must be made too for the luxury of thick cream (real cream, and not snails and chalk), and of newlaid eggs, which are not quite chickens. Such things have their advantage, and they are well calculated to seize on a young imagination; yet even for these, a week's experience should suffice, to "stale their (not) infinite variety," in the lovestricken fancy of the most romantic cockney: and then, what else remains to make the country endurable?

If I were desirous of defining the pleasures of a rural life, I should scarcely know what more than these to enumerate, unless it be the reading of stale newspapers, and the returning in dark, moonless nights, seven miles (on an average) from dinner parties, over crackscull commons, and through the haunts of smugglers, poachers, and gipsies.

It is a vast pleasure, certainly, to be dependant for a companion to speak to, upon some university prig of a parson, or on the village apothecary, who "finds in his heart to bestow all his tediousness" on the nearest householder, "possessed of aught to

was, and what was the state of the weather. The fact is thus commemorated by an observing foreigner.

"Un gros watchman reste tranquile,
Pendant que l'on vous assomme;
Mais il dit quelle heure est-il,
Quand vous dormez votr' bon somme."

Lexicographers have not yet determined, whether our pocket chronometers were so called after the Charlies, or the watchmen christened after the watches.

give;" nay, to be even grateful to Providence for the welcome avatars of these bores incarnate! Solitude, it has been said, is a fine thing; but man requires some one to whom he can *say*, that solitude is a fine thing. Yet I never could discover, by direct experiment, how long it requires to live absolutely alone, in order to vehemently desire the opportunity for lecturing a curate or an apothecary on the charms of this pleasure of a country life.

Let not then the dupe, who has been invited to a country mansion for a *battû*, or a Christmas party, imagine that the fun and hilarity, the splendid feasting, deep drinking, and merry dancing, of those brief epochs, are fair specimens of a country life—they are but the gaieties of the metropolis misplaced, the contrived saturnalia of the slaves of rurality. Even on such occasions, the master of the house is only an hotel-keeper; and for the rest of the year, he is no better than a hermit, whose solitude is unbroken, save by the curate's aforesaid weekly invasion on the family roast beef, or by an occasional "look in" of the medical practitioner, tempted from a neighbouring town by the prospect of a fee, and a game of chess.

To those, indeed, who live all their lives in the country, things may not be quite as bad as they seem. There is a principle of compensation in human affairs, or, to use a homelier expression, Providence fits every back for its burden. Thus farmers, I have been assured, derive pleasure from

the smell of a dunghill *, to which a cockney nose is wholly antipathetic. A well filled barn also is, in his contemplation, decidedly picturesque; and the heaviest day's wet that ever drove a hypochondriac to a halter, and made Kensington Gardens a desert, is delight to him whose turnips want rain, or whose aftergrass is backward.

The very vexations of the agriculturist partake of the exciting vicissitudes of gaming, and to him a barometer amply supplies the place of cards and the dice-box. Many a time, when I have sat in listless despair, tracing the drops of an *imperturbable* down-pour, as they chased each other along the panes of the windows, I have envied the agitated countenance and half-suppressed oath of the farmer, as he watched the cloud-covered hill giving new tokens of a protracted visit from Jupiter Pluvius, or has searched the heavens in vain for as much blue sky, as would make a Dutchman a pair of breeches. These are pleasures which the farmer alone can prove, and in which the cockney can never participate.

The proprietors of estates, also, have some specific pleasures known only to themselves, which seem, if not to compensate for the stupidity of their monotonous existence, at least to enable them to rub on during the periods when they cannot avoid residence. The pleasure of possession is in itself something considerable. "I am monarch of all I

* Dulcis odor liceri ex re qualibet.

survey," goes to a merrier tune in the rich valleys of Devonshire, or in the highly cultivated plains of Norfolk, than it would upon Selkirk's desolate island. The owner of the dreariest fenny flat of Lincolnshire, or of the blackest bog in Ireland, can look from the bow-window of his bleak residence, and find something agreeable in the prospect.

Besides, there is always for this privileged class of mortals that greatest of all delights — the pleasure of tormenting. They can bully the tenants, *justice* the country, and gratify their most malignant passions with impunity, simply by preparing an excuse just plausible enough to enable a judge to throw dust into the eyes of the jurymen. Even this proviso is now scarcely necessary; for who would in these days dream of making a magistrate responsible, through an action at law which he is sure to lose?

Then again, the proprietor can amuse himself with inclosing the commons; because it is safer to steal the common from the poor man's goose, than to steal the rich man's goose from the common. In short, there is no end to the ways in which an estated gentleman can keep a whole population in hot water; sowing dissentions, awakening jealousies, irritating the indignant feelings, and, consequently, enjoying his *otium cum dignitate* as a proprietor should do.

All these country sports, however, are cut off from those inferior persons, whose estates are in the Bank books, or floating in an East Indiaman.

That the reader may not imagine this picture to be drawn from fancy, or picked up in the stray pages of some fashionable novel or newspaper report, it is good that he should know, how once a year I am compelled, for my sins, to make a duty visit to some relations in the country, from whom I have great expectations. Never did "a double letter from Northamptonshire" excite a deeper sensation, than the arrival of this much dreaded invitation produces in my bosom, recurring, as it does, with the punctuality of a tailor's Christmas bill. Imagine the horror merely of leaving town—the dreary hoarseness of the mail-horn—the melancholy annunciation that "all's right," when one feels within that all is deplorably wrong—the sinking of the spirits as the last gas-light disappears—and the yearning of the heart for the Angel at Islington, or the Elephant and Castle, in taking leave of them, perhaps, (as one is tempted to imagine) for ever! There is something quite awful in this most typical separation from cheerfulness and civilization; and were it not that I sleep in a coach like a top, I verily believe that I should often have got out at Barnet; or, at all events, should have shrunk from encountering the Downs of Dunstable.

When first I embarked on one of these expeditions, I was as ignorant as any other native of the *banlieu* of Bow-bell. Every thing at starting was a source of delight. Every duck-pond was a lake; and all the little cabbage gardens of the hedge ale-

houses, where we stopped to change horses, were so many paradises. The hens and the chickens were matters of endless speculation and amusement; and the turkey-cock occupied my imagination during an entire morning, from his striking resemblance to a lord mayor. Picking my own gooseberries was enchanting, till my fingers, covered with scratches and dripping with blood, reminded me of the superior accommodation of buying them hot and hot, out of a pewter pint-pot. Catching my own fish, too, was pleasant, till I discovered that the fish refused to take the hook, and that my own nose did not.

But, above all things, doing nothing from morning till night but walk about, was extremely amusing, until I found out that my walks were without an object. This discovery was not long in the making. I soon ascertained that nothing more closely resembles one green field than another, that rivers are all brothers, and that hills possess the most astonishing family likeness. Inanimate objects (however beautiful) are like French ladies' husbands, and "*ne savent pas remplir l'ame;*" while country bumpkins, without being beautiful, are still less interesting.

At first, I thought the fault was in myself; and I began to be mortified with the idea, that, notwithstanding all my love for Rousseau, and my having Werter by heart, the "gods had not made me poetical." But I was soon convinced that I am not singular in this disgust at rural things, and

that the country affords, even to the natives themselves, but a miserable sort of existence. This I detected, by the frequency of their meals, and the anxiety with which the hour of their successive advent is anticipated. Eating, in the country, is the great business of life; and, "Is dinner ready?" is a question repeated as often, and in as many different keys, as Sterne's, "Alas! poor Yorick." If it were not for luncheon—a meal of which every genuine countryman may say, "*decies repetita placebit*"—time itself would be lost in eternity.

Now all this is the more remarkable, inasmuch as that, when meal-time does come, the best supplied country table is very inferior to those which are furnished from Leadenhall Market. Your fish —but don't mention fish. On the sea-coast, you have the pleasure of seeing delicious turbots, and mackarel with the hues of the rainbow, packed up at your very door, and sent to town: and if your residence be inland, muddy tench, and eels, soles, that the Pope himself could not save, a stale lobster, or a barrel of gaping high-scented oysters, *per* coach from London, are your greatest dainties. Then the best desserts and ices, which the country affords, are nothing to those provided by Gunter; while for meat, you are condemned to eat your way from the sheep's nose to his tail, without any other variation, than the eternal boiled fowl, with bacon and greens. Beef never occurs but once a week; and a joint of veal is as rare, as if all calves were golden. It is, moreover, notorious that a real cook

will not live permanently out of London, if you would give him the pay of a Lieutenant-general; and as for a French dish, you might as well look for a French opera.

The country, we are told, is the place for contemplative minds; for those, to whom their own ideas are a sufficient world, and who find in the presence of nature, themes of endless reflection, and ever new delight; as if a Londoner's mind is not ten times better company to the owner, than a countryman's, who whistles as he drives his plough, "for want of thought;" and as if Fleet Street and the Strand do not furnish a thousand more themes for philosophic inquiry, or for devout wonder, than all Chateaubriand felt or fancied, when he roared out, "Taygeta" like a madman.

The man who candidly admits his preference for a sea-coal fire, and for the society of cultivated companions, is looked upon as a common-place personage, as one who cannot bear to be alone, nor exist without the ball-room and the playhouse. But how stands the fact? That the country is the especial abode of dulness, is demonstrated beyond yea and nay, by the single circumstance, that every body hurries to London, during the finest months of the year; during that season, when an out-of-door life is alone endurable, and when nature offers, in her fondest prodigality, sights, sounds, and odours to delight the senses, and to intoxicate the imagination. Then it is, if ever, that the country possesses what may be thought a charm. Yet nobody

visits his estate, till the shooting and hunting begin when the days are short, and the trees are disrobed of their mantle of green.

Thus, then, the truth comes out; the contemplative man, the communer with the Deity rendered visible through his works, leaves the *fade* amusement of the town, to employ his superior intellects in worrying hares, in foundering horses, and in bringing murder and carnage to the haunts of the partridge and the pheasant! Without these innocent and intellectual pursuits, *l'homme des champs*, is a man of *ennui;* and the delights of the country are "as tedious as a twice-told tale."

Surely it is not arrogance to say that he, whose soul is filled to saturation with field sports, is a man of very little soul indeed! and in the scale of beings, is not much more elevated than his own pointers?

Oh! but then, there is husbandry, gardening, natural history, study, and other more worthy amusements of a country life! Oh! yes, husbandry, of course—not meaning the trade of agriculture, but gentlemen farming, as it is called, which is one of the idlest of means for killing time. If practised for gain, it is a sordid occupation, defiling alike the mind and the person, and taking the bread out of the mouths of the poorer cultivators. If practised as a mere pastime, and at a loss, it is a shameful waste of the powers of the soil, in a country which does not produce sufficient food for its inhabitants. The assertion that gentleman-farming is beneficial to the community, in

the way of experiment, is a sham plea. The real farmer, who must live by his labour, alone makes useful experiments; because he alone experiments at a ruinous personal risk. Playing at farming, is the refuge of those who can neither think nor read; and who prefer injuring their property, to enduring the load of an existence, which they know not how to enjoy.

As to gardening, there is something, perhaps, in that. Of all rural pastimes, gardening is the most interesting and rational; yet the story of our first parents exemplifies that, as a recourse, it is not enough to keep man out of mischief. Eve did not fall the victim of London dissipation; nor did Adam lose his innocence in taverns and gaming-houses. Besides, a man need not emigrate into the country, to indulge his taste for gardening. The florist *may* have more pleasure in London, than he *can* have in the country. The productions of every clime are laid at the Cockney's feet, collected in the small space of a nursery ground. There is scarcely a hundred square yards in the suburbs of the metropolis, without its specimens of vegetable rarities, any one of which the country gardener might be proud to possess. The rich only can obtain extensive hothouses in the country; in London, they may be enjoyed by every one who can afford to buy a pot of mignonette.

As for natural history, as that is generally pursued, it is merely a pompous inanity, a substitution of sounds for ideas, of nomenclature for knowledge.

With the exception of a very few men of real science, (almost universally the inhabitants of great cities,) your observers of the loves of the cockchafers, your speculators upon the intrigues of snails, are the heaviest mortals that breathe. For one White of Selbourn, we have thousands of "pretenders," fit only to doze on the benches of learned societies, and be the dupes of lying travellers and of mystifying venders of curiosities.

Lastly, as to books: a man may, it is true, read books in the country—if he can get them; but admitting this very essential *datum*, there is no reason why he should be obliged to go into banishment for the sake of reading, while there is a two-pair-of-stairs apartment to be had in Lincoln's Inn or the Temple, to retire to, and be alone.

But, to smash this long argument of rural intellectuality at a blow, did you ever pass an evening with a knot of mere country gentlemen? If you have not, you may take the ghost's word for it, they are the greatest bores "conversation ever coped with." Their talk is all shop, all locality, all personality—impossible Munchausen leaps, long shots, election squabbles, grand jury work, births, deaths, marriages, disputes for precedence, warnings off of preserves, &c. &c. If this be intellectual life, give me a city feast, or a meeting of creditors.

A stranger who drops into such company, is as completely thrown out of all conversation or understanding, as a New Zealander at a lecture on

the atomic theory, or a man of sense at the readings of a blue-stocking party. How wearisome life really is to these moral philosophers, may be seen in the dullness of their houses, in the heaviness of their looks, in their early going to bed, their "sleepings on benches in the afternoon;" to say nothing of their seeking relief in the two sermons on a Sunday, with the cheering variety of all they see, and all they learn, in the village church.

It was observed in France before the revolution, that a nobleman could not spend six months on his estate, without losing something of the polish and refinement of the court; and it may be worth while to ask yourself, whether your neighbours, old Cash and his family, when they return from their annual trip to Worthing (it is not altogether so bad at Brighton), do not seem to be quite another sort of beings. Not a trace of the *beaux esprits* of Finsbury will be found remaining on their persons. Their ideas have become as sunburnt as their faces; and it would not be surprising if they should be beset by the pickpockets, and hustled, for so many country puts.

If the country were, indeed, what is pretended, how is philosophy to explain the pains so universally taken to make the summer retreats of our banished citizens as like the town as possible, and to destroy, by every imaginable device, all access of rural ideas? Go to Cheltenham, to Brighton, or to Margate—no two peas are more alike than these are to London. There, will be found balls, pro-

menades, theatres, hackney-coaches and pastry-cooks, methodist meetings and jewellers, news-rooms and wig-makers. Ere long, too, we shall hear of a stock-exchange, and of provincial branches of Lloyd's being established in all these places of rural resort.

In leaving London, country is the last thing most people think about—*cœlum, non animum, mutant*. By a common consent, too, while the country folks are thus imitating London, the Londoners are driving London out of town; so that in a short time these extremes, like most others, will meet. The whole island will then be covered with bricks and mortar, till not a green field will be left; and the landed interest be driven to legislate for the protection of mignonette pots, and the preservation of sparrows on the chimney-tops.

This were, indeed, a happy consummation; nor is the aspiration for its speedy completion so selfish as some may imagine. Every one to his liking, and live and let live, are excellent maxims: but if, after the perusal of this paper, there yet remain any advocates for a country life, is there not Switzerland for them to take their pleasure in uninterruptedly? Let them make a pathway over Mount Blanc, and scribble nonsense in the innkeepers' police books, without let or molestation; if they are tired of all this, there is very picturesque scenery in New South Wales, and inexhaustible capabilities in Van Dieman's Land.

A FEW WORDS IN DEFENCE OF PUNNING.

Omne tulit *pun Tom,* qui miscuit utile dulci.—*Swift.*

THE man who has not music in his soul, we are told, is fit for treasons; which is not improbably the reason why some of the crowned heads of Europe are so much more liberal of their diamonds to public singers, than they are in rewarding their most faithful servants; and why they squander their money upon the opera, when other departments of the public service are suffered to starve. How a fondness for harmony should induce men to submit patiently to the crude modulations, abrupt transitions, and extreme sharps of despotism, is not very clear; but so it is—it seems an universal law of nature, that the more airs a minister gives himself, the more popular he is; and his most misplaced *crotchets* are rarely *bars* to the certainty of his success. In all matters of state, men are usually led by their ears.

But though treason (whether it be the treason of governments against people, or the treason of people against governments) is a very treasonable

thing, yet there are men worse than the unmusical, and more to be avoided than Horace's Mr. Black.* What, for instance, shall be said of the man who has not punning in his soul? "The motions of his spirit are (indeed) dull as night, and his affections dark as Erebus," with a vengeance. "Let no such man be trusted"—no, not so much as for a halfpenny roll.

Of all the bores in the infinite regions of boredum, there is none against whom an honest man's gorge rises with more disgust, than the villanous spoilsport, who, unblessed with any prominent excellence to distinguish him from the common herd, seeks to make himself considered in society by professing to dislike a pun. Were a punster by his very nature less than the mildest tempered fellow in Europe, the least inveterate must long ago have paid damages on account of these miserable Smellfunguses,—so strongly must he be tempted to smite, when thus thwarted by their croaking, in the career of his humour.

Nine times out of ten, the professed enemy of a pun is a pure hypocrite, one "well studied in the sad ostent to please—" not "his grandam," honest woman! but his yokefellows in knavish gravity, whose intellects are of even more spanlike dimensions, than those of the arrantest old woman in Christendom. In the tenth instance, the punhater is a blank, a true kinsman of Ariosto's "Cardinal

* "Hic *Niger* est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto."

Hippolito, and as ready to demand of a punster, "*Dove Diavolo avete trovato*," &c.

"There's never any of these demure boys come to any proof." They might, indeed, have served to make a Master in Chancery (when "such things were, and were most *dear*"), provided a Chancellor could take a fancy to their politics. They may still do for an evening lecturer to pew-openers in a city church, or may contribute, with two other old women, and a cat, to lay the foundation of a new sect of fanatics: nay, by dint of much grinding, they may smuggle a licence to practise physic, and qualify for despatching their patients, and breaking Priscian's head, with the same blow of a huge ℞. But what wigblock is of so ligneous a compact, as to be unfit for any of these purposes?

A mute at a funeral, an old maid at a love-feast, a college dean at a commemoration of benefactors, or a clerical pluralist that cannot get his tithes, is quicksilver itself, when compared to the lumpish sadness of a genuine punhater, who sinks "from one sign of dolour to another," as the spirits of those around him rise responsive to the quips and quiddities of the wordcatching son of Momus. The awful solemnity with which such a man advances his favourite maxim, that "he who would pun would pick a pocket" (and observe, that the rogue who won't pun, forsooth, can alliliterate); the rueful pertinacity with which he purses up his features to a coloquintida acerbity, lest by any chance he should stumble on the joke,

and be seduced into a chuckle; and the self-complacency with which he takes credit for superior wisdom, on the score of this owl-like gravity, are worthy of the pencil of Cruikshank, and the pen of Hood.

Never, in the records of human perversity, did mortal man conscientiously and from the bottom of his heart abuse a pun, who possessed the slightest ability to make one himself, or who had fancy enough to comprehend the reason "why darned stockings are like dead men," which is the very *pons asinorum* of budding wits and sucking jesters. "*Omne quod supra nos, nihil ad nos;*" and dulness revenges itself for its inapprehensiveness, by contemning what it cannot understand. The pun-haters, one and all, hypocrites or no hypocrites, are impressed with that true mark of the beast, a perpetual recurrence to the *cui bono*. They are the fellows who estimate everything by its market price, who hold Shakspeare for a vagabond—think Milton no logician — and cut short a good story which is setting the table in a roar, by asking the narrator, "But, is it all true?"

Pope's oft-quoted aphorism, that "gentle dulness ever loves a joke," is not only a most unphilosophical remark, but a scandalous libel. Gentle dulness is essentially a grave personage, and would be as soon found in a house of ill-fame, as in the perpetration of a pun. If ever, in an absurd spirit of imitation, she ventures to be jocose, her jokes are "no jokes" to anybody but herself. The truth is,

that though Pope wove Bolingbroke's philosophy into rhyme, and wrote what he called moral Essays, he was but a superficial observer of unsophisticated humanity, and dealt largely in commonplace. How false is his aristocratic sophism, that "a little learning is a dangerous thing." Is a little money dangerous? Or a little interest with the Treasury? Or a little health, or a little temper, a little old wine in one's cellar, or a little woman for one's wife? A great deal of some of these good things may be better than a little, yet, who ever heard "drink deep or taste not," applied in such cases. Methinks I see a man refusing a hundred pounds, because it won't make him a Rothschild; or rejecting the mistress of his soul, because she is not six feet high, and as round as a barrel! If a little learning is a dangerous thing, too much (we are told) will drive a man mad — a most *felicitous* remark, that, of Felixes, and worthy of letters of gold. What a gunpowder Percy this same learning must be! No wonder the Emperor of Austria is afraid of it.

Never mind Pope, then, my friends, but pun away, if pun ye can. Men of genuine talent have never refused to *desipere in loco*, that is, to condescend to a pun in place and season. From Cicero to Porson,* a series of punsters might be enume-

* Porson, when supping with a friend in Emanuel, in whose rooms he was to sleep, was asked, after sundry tumblers of spirits and water, whether he would again replenish his glass, or have a bed-candle? He had drunk enough, but his sitting-

rated, embracing some of the brightest names in literature, whose authority might serve to overturn an ecclesiastical canon, in the face of a general council. Judges pun on the bench; there was one (an Irish judge) who could not even refrain from punning when passing sentence. Orators pun in the House of Commons. Even the Lord's chamber sometimes echoes with a pun. In short, if punning were made a capital offence, the lovers of executions would have their pleasures exalted by meeting a great deal "better company upon Tyburn tree."

The dislike of your matter-of-fact men for a pun is the more singular, inasmuch as punning is an art of very remote antiquity, and a very conspicuous part of the wisdom of our ancestors. The immortal gods, it is said, made the world in joke — and a bitter bad joke it was. The first man lost Paradise as a *pun*-ishment for disobedience (vide Milton); and his wife was made out of one of his ribs, in punning allusion to her being a *cost*-ly commodity.

The oldest records of man, the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt, were a running series of puns; the phonetic characters were an after-thought. The earlier system perfectly resembled those mysterious writings which serve to introduce the tenants of the nursery to the dogmas of religion, and in which a series of pictured signs display the Trinity under

breeches were still on; so he replied in Greek, "οὐ τοδὲ, οὐδὲ τἄλλα, which, while it sounds "neither toddy nor tallow," signifies neither one nor the other. His puns were ever "*marquès au bon coin.*"

the image of a triangle, in which the pronoun personal is depicted under the likeness of an eye; and the possessive "your" (ewer) is faithfully represented by a milk-jug.

From this use of puns as the means of writing, to the abuse of making it the end of writing, the step is not great. It may, therefore, be conjectured, in the absence of a better hypothesis, and, *pace tua,* Dr. Young, or your's, Monsieur Champollion, that the so called tomb of Alexander is an Egyptian Joe Miller; and the two needles of Cleopatra an "*Esprit Pointu,*" or a "Laugh and go fat." What conjecture can be more probable than that the tomb of a great man should set forth the jests (gesta) of its illustrious tenant; for why should not his good sayings, as well as his good deeds, "be remembered in his epitaph:" and as for Cleopatra, are there not thousands of good women whose whole stock of wit lies in their needle?

If hieroglyphics were puns, which is at least as likely, as that Solan geese come of a barnacle, then let the sticklers for gravity bear in mind how high in honour were placed the hierogrammatists, or pun-makers, among that wise and pious nation *quibus nascuntur in hortis numina—and* which found matter for devotion even in asses and bull-calves. These state punsters—for we can call them no less—were *honoris causa* exempted from all civil employments; and it is, perhaps, to this early example, we should refer the professed idleness of those modern young men of wit and plea-

sure about town who sing for their suppers, pun for their dinners, and who, as a young actress once declared of herself, "cannot abide work." With these gentlemen, it is certain, all civil employments are decidedly in ill repute; and, as they would sooner lose a friend than a joke, they are not always *civil* even in their sport.

Furthermore, the hierogrammatists were reputed the first persons in dignity, next to the king; and they bore a kind of sceptre in their hands. In our own times have we not seen a Canning (the most cogent of jokers) prime minister? And certain secretaries, both of state and Admiralty, have been notorious for making better way on the road to fortune by their wit, than by either their manners, or their honesty. Fox, Sheridan, Courtenay, *et hoc genus omne*, were famous in their generation; and if the Tories contrived to keep all the "good things" to themselves, the Whigs carried it hollow with the good sayings. *

This preference for jesters is not without good reason; for he who has the laugh on his side, is pretty sure to have the nation there likewise. Oh! "It makes me strange even to the disposition that I owe," to note these things, and to mark the little consequence they draw after them, with the professed traducers of a pun—with whom, in all other matters, authority is reason, and precedent law. That men, whose devotion to all things established

* This point was better made by a Tory lady, who said to her Whig friend, "The wit is all on your side, but the joke is on our's."

bears a kindred spirit to that of the ape-and-onion-arians of the remotest ages, should be thus recalcitrunt, is absolutely past comprehension!

Taking leave of the Egyptians with this additional remark, that if their hieroglyphics be puns, Tubal Cain, the first brass-founder, must probably have been the first public punster—or, at the least, the first who applied punning to the purposes of monumental inscription—let us proceed to notice the honour in which punning was held among the Greeks.

But here, let no unfavourable inferences be drawn against the art, by the Mitfords and his congenial Reviewers, in consequence of its having been practised by those ultra-liberal prototypes of Jacobinism, the Athenians. There are some usages which liberals and absolutists must hold in common: more is the pity. Eating and lying, sleeping and peculating, being politic with a friend, and smooth to an enemy, are, like *homo*, common to all mankind, in their gestion of public, as of private affairs. If such things have not always been wholly eschewed by one party, because they are largely employed by another, it would be absolutely unfair to make a case of exception against punning.

In point of style, at least, the Greeks are *omni exceptione majores*, and must be taken as models; and the best Greek writers have condescended to a pun. Sophocles, with that regard to nature, on which the favourites of the French Academy, the champions of classicism, have so much improved,

does not scruple to make Ajax pun upon his own name, in the very depth of his distress.* We have ourselves seen persons in a very reasonable paroxysm of rage suddenly relieved, and restored to good humour, by the perpetration of a pun; nor is there any reason why the bitterness of grief may not equally be alleviated by the same remedy. Euripides also cracks almost as good a jest upon Polynices; and Æschylus, nearly carrying the joke to extravagance, heaps pun upon pun, when he calls Helen ἕλενας; ἑλανδρος, ἑλεπτολις, which a punster would translate, by saying that the ex-wife of Menelaus played Helen (H—ll &) all with the ships, men, and cities of Troy and Greece.

Among the Romans, likewise, punning was successfully cultivated. Quinctilian, it is true, speaks dispraisingly of the art; but it should be remembered that his remark is apropos to oratory; and that oratory is a humbug, of a nature by far too serious to admit the hazarding a smile, which may as probably be turned against the speaker, as tell in his behalf. The sublime is too near to the ridiculous, to admit of such liberties. If Quinctilian meant more than this, and really intended to insinuate that a pun, like an apple, is *malum in se*, we can honestly reply that this priggish concoctor of rhetorical receipts lived in a debased age of literature; and appeal from his preaching, to the practice of Cicero.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, the greatest orator of

* Νυν γαρ παρεστι και δις Αιαξειν εμοι και τρις.

Rome, its only metaphysician, its pleasantest letter-writer, the hero of the Catiline conspiracy, the scourge of Anthony, he who was saluted "Father of his country," was an inveterate punster. "*In jocis*," says Macrobius, "*facundissimus, ut in omnibus fuit.*" His "*te quoque* (*coque*) *jure fqvebo*" will outlive his second philippic. Aulus Gellius relates of him, that he used to turn this talent to a good account; and praises it in him as a part of the perfect orator, that he would get out of a scrape, when lying happened to be not convenient, by a clinch or a *bon-mot.**

This is here noticed, principally to point out the progress which oratory has made in modern times; that whereas, in the Roman Senate, every man was left to his own mother wit, to pun himself out of his difficulties, as he best might—in the British Senate, it has been customary to entertain a professional Jack Pudding to defend his party, and to interpose his jests, like a feather-bed, between the weak points in their defences, and the assaults of the enemy's artillery.

Ovid, likewise, was a desperate punster;† not to speak of his thousand and one *concetti*, each of

* "Hæc quoque disciplina rhetorica est callide et cum astu res criminosas citra periculum confiteri; ut si objectum sit turpe aliquid, quod negari non queat, responsione joculari eludas, et rem facias risu magis dignam quam crimine."—L. xii. chap. 12.

† Witness his "cur ego non dicam, Furia, te furiam;"—cum multis aliis.

which is the misprision of a pun. Horace's punning satire on a certain Mr. King, of those days, places him high amongst the Latian Joes.

Finally, that we may not exhaust the subject, Augustus Cæsar was an arch wag, and, so to speak, the emperor of all the jokers. Like Falstaff, he was not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others; as the following epigram on his nautical disasters fully justifies.

"Postquam bis classe victus naves perdidit,
Aliquando ut vincat, ludit assidue aleam."

So decided a punster was this great man, that according to Suetonius, jesting was almost a part of his court ceremonial. When Vectius, with a zeal worthy of the Agricultural Society's gold medal, ploughed up his father's grave, the affair was made a matter of *grave* accusation against him, before the Emperor; but Augustus facetiously defended the Geoponic action, asserting that this was indeed "to cultivate his father's memory."* The pun almost escapes in translation.

Punning has, in many instances, been of signal service in the arts and sciences. Mythology, if not founded in punning, is closely allied to it. Almost all the great metamorphoses recorded by Ovid, are mere practical puns on the names of the heroes, or something very like it. The oracles, too, could not have gotten on without punning; and he who took their answers at their literal value,

* "Hoc est vere monumentum patris colere."

and did not look for some clinch or conundrum below the surface, was, for the most part, egregiously duped.

Law, which is itself a sort of fortune-telling, is equally indebted to quips and quiddities for its best turns. The law definition of agreement (*aggreamentum, quasi aggregatio mentium*) is a pun direct; and there is this further analogy between law and punning, that as a law is no law till it is broken, so a joke is no joke till it is cracked.

It is to the praise of punning, that it flourished greatly in the Augustan age of ultra-loyalty and ultra-credulity, under the Solomon of the West, James I. of pious memory. In his time, every judge was a Norbury; * and the pulpit vied with the stage in fun and facetiousness. There are, indeed, some straight-laced persons, who disapprove of this mixture of the sacred and the profane: but who would not prefer being tried by a punning judge, whose points may stand your friend, when all the other points of the law are against you, rather than by a Scroggs or a Jeffries; and who

* When this was written, the worthy Peer was yet living; but, alas, I may now say,

"Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit, &c."

He's gone, much lamented by ev'ry good fellow
Who loves a Joe Miller, or sober, or mellow.

His sayings will remain in the fasti of the punster, when the recording angel (it is to be hoped) shall have written *non mi recordo*, on the subject of his more serious doings; for which reason we retain his name in this page.

would not relish a jesting parson, better than a fanatical blow-coal? As for the nonsense of the affair, it is not necessary to be droll, in order to be nonsensical; and it is certainly far less irreverent to laugh with the preacher, than, (as one too often must, in the case of your grave proser), to laugh at him.

Puns may be made the channels for communicating valuable precepts, and for insinuating verities, which would recoil on the propounder, if fired in the point-blank manner of a syllogism or an axiom. What agriculturist would not be grateful for the economic hint conveyed by our quondam friend of the Irish Common Pleas, to a reverend acquaintance, who had failed in the experiment to feed his horses upon whins; "although, for the bruising of the thorns, he had," as he informed the company, "pounded the esculent for four-and-twenty hours?" His lordship at once replied, "Then take my advice, Bishop, and the next time, instead of the whins, pound your horses for four-and-twenty hours; I'll be bound that they won't leave a stalk."

Again, what an important political truth is involved in another *bon-mot* of the same great original, propounded to the Viceroy of that day, who was complaining that his predecessors had neglected to drain a certain pond in the Phœnix Park, which rendered the Vice-regal residence damp and unwholesome. "They have been too busily employed in draining the rest of the country;" was the pithy reply.

Of the same solid character was Hannibal's remark to Antiochus, who at a review, in which his troops were paraded, glittering with gold, silver, and jewellery, asked if these were enough for the Romans. "Ay," replied the *punnic* chief, "that they are, let the Romans be as avaricious as they may."

But if wit and wisdom ever housed together under one roof, it was in Pollio's punning defence of his own silence, when Augustus, like certain modern statesmen who dabble in the reviews, wrote an article against him, rather in the Gifford style." The scribe who proscribes," he said, "is not easily answered" — "*At ego taceo; non est facile in eum scribere, qui potest proscribere.*"

The mnemonical system of Professor Feinagle, of *quondam* celebrity, was hung upon pegs, each of which was a pun, though it must be confessed a cruel bad one. Thus the index to Julius Cæsar was a Jew and a pair of scissars; and that of Henry VIII. a hen and eight chickens! Had this learned Theban been a Frenchman instead of a German, he would have matured his plan into something more mercurial, and have edified the world with what might have been called "*cours de mnemonique par calembourgs, à l'usage des beaux esprits.*"

A nearly similar contrivance has likewise been employed by some of our best anatomical teachers, who give pith to their lectures by illustrative drolleries, which jog the flagging attention of the hearer, and fix the facts in his recollection: so that

now-a-days a man may break his bones at less risk of being crippled for life, because the teacher has broken a jest on the anatomy of the injured part.

The only place in which a pun is not admissible is a king's speech, and the reason is clear. Those documents being got up for the occasion, are calculated, as far as possible, to be forgotten, the moment when that occasion is passed; they are, therefore, not only divested of point, but for the most part, also, of all assignable meaning.

The practice of punning requires many virtues: "*non cuivis homini contingit.*" On ingenuity it is needless to enlarge — *celà va sans dire*; but it does not demand less patience than ability, to await the proper occasion for introducing a pun, in order to avoid incurring a rebuff, like his, who, quoting Samson's strength, *àpropos de bottes*, was told, that he himself was stronger than Samson, for he had dragged him in neck and shoulders.

What a scientific combination does it require to produce a proper opportunity for a preconceived pun, from afar, unaffectedly, and without suspicion. A good pun should spring naturally out of the conversation (*naturali pulchritudine*, as Petronius sayeth); for if forcibly introduced, it is lost. Neither should it be blurted out, when the minds of the hearers are not predisposed to sympathize: as, for instance, at a funeral, in the midst of a love scene, or when a great man is talking. But as it is well known, that even on the bed of death a genuine punster will say his say, it is impossible to

estimate too highly that self-possession, which restrains the cacöethes on less solemn occasions. This is indeed "*animam regere,*" and a greater virtue than not to strike a servant who breaks a china dish, or to refrain from imitating the Spanish prince, who, Peter Pindar tells us, flung the hot coffee into his princess's face, because she

> "ate a roll,
> On which the selfish prince had set his soul."

Punsters are often required to make great personal exertions and sacrifices for the forwarding a joke. So it was with the man who over-ate himself, to empty a dish of chickens, in order to make way for a pun upon "neck or nothing." At another time, this gourmand abstained from his two favourite dishes, that he might be able to remark, that he was "not soup-or-fish-al." He would call too for brandy and water, which he detests, in order to say that he is not a *rum* fellow.* He once caught a dangerous cold by walking bareheaded in the rain, for the sake of a pun on Sir Christopher Hat-on; and he actually lost a large sum at a hell, which, for security from the police, was held in a garret, that he might form a resolution against playing *so high* for the future.

* The celebrated and Rev. S. S. is accused of having made use of this clinch, when asked if the Whigs had not given him the vacant bishopric. "No," he said, "they will give me nothing but Jamaica, because they know I shall make such a rum bishop."

In short, Horace's "*sudavit et alsit*" is especially applicable to the punster. But the labour is not too much for the reward: for the punster is in argument invincible, and he is never so sure of a victory as when his logic is defeated, and all his graver defences beaten down. The best conducted chain of reasoning, to which a rational answer is impossible, is utterly overthrown by what Shakspeare unwisely calls "a fool-born jest." The whole company takes a decided part with the joker, though he is decidedly wrong, merely because he raises a laugh at the expence of his antagonist. "*Solventur risu tabulæ tu missus abibis*"—oh, glorious privilege of punning!

THE PLEASURES OF HEARING.

"At that instant the abbey bells began to peel so loud, that we could not hear one another speak; and this peal was for the honour of Mr. Bullock, an eminent cow-keeper of Tottenham, who had just arrived, to drink the waters for indigestion."—*Smollet, Humphry Clinker.*

"Out rogue, and must thou blow thy horn, too?"
Ben Jonson.

It has been remarked that the blind are mostly of an uncommonly cheerful disposition; and that they bear up against their lamentable deprivation, better than their fellow-sufferers, the deaf. This difference may afford some measure of the social tendencies of the species; for, excepting what concerns the craving desire of man to know what is passing in the minds of others, there is no comparison between the relative value of eyes and ears.

The pleasures we receive from the organs of vision are infinite; while the disgusts are comparatively few. There are few natural forms absolutely ugly; and expression will change the character of lineaments decidedly unpleasing; while

the most rude and deformed of inanimate objects, will affect the mind graciously, when they strike the imagination as picturesque. Sight places us in relation with the immensity of the universe; it contributes, beyond all other faculties, to our sense of security; and the variety and the intensity of its impressions give it a decided preponderance in the formation of fixed and positive ideas.

The ear, on the contrary, limited in the sphere of its functional activity, and excepting only in the instance of speech, conveying but few, and those vague, ideas—is a source of endless vexations. Over our eyes, we are, in some degree, the masters; and can turn away from those works of art, which do not satisfy our feelings; whereas we are at the mercy of every tyrant who chooses to file a saw, or to whistle Rossini, without time, tune, or an idea of the music. Scarcely twice in a twelvemonth does a practised and delicate ear receive the full gratification of which it is capable; while scarce twenty minutes of the day pass without some infliction on the auditory nerve, to disturb the equanimity of the percipient.

Of all the senses, the ear is the most easily offended, and the most difficult to satisfy. Even in that colloquial intercourse, which seems so perfectly to reconcile the blind to the absence of external forms, the ear is more frequently harassed by impertinence, and shocked by folly, than it is gratified by the melody of good feeling and good

sense. How often are we forced to envy Sir Joshua Reynolds,

"To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering,
When they judged without skill, he was still hard of hearing!"

At many a sermon a man of any real religion might be well pleased to find a refuge in "shifting his trumpet," with the President of the Academy; and there are discourses, as well as sonatas, which the hearer might with justice wish to be impossible. At the theatres there is a lobby to retreat to; and it is no breach of decorum to quit your box: but in a pew, the preacher has you fast; and though he preached treason or persecution, you must hear him out! Miserable, too, is the condition of an unlucky judge, compelled to listen, *ad infinitum*, to any proser possessed of a wig and a brief, who chuses to bestow his tediousness upon the court; and there are occasions in which the Speaker of the House of Commons, her Majesty's listener-general, might give his ears to be, in fact, as in seeming, "as deaf as a post."

But setting aside the intellectual miseries derived through the ear, and sticking to physical annoyances, think of the horror of an intimate acquaintance with a voice like a corncrake, or of a companion through life who cannot produce one perfect intonation, whose tenderest words split the drum of the ear by their harsh vibrations, or insist on making their way into the world through the

nose! These are evils, of which every one is a judge; but the musically organized alone can understand the nervous irritability excited by the failure of a single comma in the pitch of the voice, or even by a passing and accidental roughness in a note, which, though otherwise correct, would dash with gall a Pasta's divine execution.

Our Norman ancestors seem fully to have appreciated this variety, when they appropriated the term "noise," (which originally signified annoyance in the abstract,) to those especial grievances, which attack the organ of hearing. This etymology is conclusive against the ear, as being the most fastidious of the senses, and the common violator of the peace of the soul.

It may, perhaps, be objected that the majority of natural sounds are pleasing; that the singing of birds, the murmuring of waters, are gracious; and that even the mournful sighing of the winds is not without some charm, when it does not precisely pass through a keyhole. The majestic thunder, too, is pealing and solemn; and the distant echo of the waves, beating on the shore, begets a pleasurable sensation. But then, man! that eternal noise-maker, that unwearied dealer in dissonances, rarely suffers nature to be heard; and to give one's ears a fair chance, it would be necessary to abandon all association with one's species.

In no respect has the liberty of the subject degenerated to such outrageous license, as in the matter of noise. It should seem as if dissonance was re-

garded as a fundamental article of Magna Charta, and silence deemed as unconstitutional as ship-money. A man of any delicacy of ear can hardly endure to live within the bills of mortality. Complaints are made, and with good reason, too, against the fogs of London;" but what are these, to the acoustic abominations which prevail there, "from night till morn, from morn till dewy eve." Every itinerant mender of kettles, every rascally knifegrinder, presumes that he has a right to assassinate you, like Hamlet's uncle, through "the porches of your ears;" and "Meole below," as wicked as Macbeth, has "murdered sleep," without rebuke, since the days of our Saxon progenitors.*

From the shrill pipe of the morning sweep, to the deep bass of the Hebrew old-clothes'-man, there is a gamut of dissonant sounds perpetually exercised, in which every trade and calling has its share. †

During the revolutionary war, when victories came in as regularly as the post (would that they

* It is a curious fact, that the London milkmaid's pronunciation of her staple commodity, still answers exactly to the Anglo-Saxon spelling "Meole;" and it shows how accurately the original sound of a word can be preserved by popular tradition, amidst all the progressive refinements in speech of the upper classes.

† Many acoustic offences have been attacked by Act of Parliament, "within fifteen miles round the metropolis." But the memory of them is here preserved for the benefit of future generations of antiquaries.

had not cost such heavy postage,) and when the motto of our admirals might have been "no day without a dispatch," the nuisance of newsmen's horns so far transcended the united noises of all other vociferators, that the magistrates of the city, "those sage, grave men," found it necessary to legislate especially against them. No other trade could gain a hearing, so incessant and obstreperous were their blasts.

The wits of that day, indeed, would have it, that the ears were not exactly the part of the head which our aldermen desired to protect from outrage; but what will not a wit say or do to make good a quibble, or to plant a palpable hit? Gold may be bought too dearly; and even the joys which a good batch of "great news, bloody news," must afford to the snug citizen, who "lives at home at ease," and knows nothing of the *pleasures* of war, beyond taxation and a gazette—were bought at too high a price, by the head-splitting tantararara and noisy ejaculations of the gentlemen of the tin tube.

Another simple sin which requires legislative interference, no less than the horn, is the big-drum. Tambourines and triangles are bad enough, Heaven knows! — mere noise for the sake of noise, monotonous and subversive of all music; but they are nothing to the big-drum, that unpitying rattler of windows and shaker of houses, that everlasting street-accompaniment to the grave and the gay, the martial and the tender, the sentimental and the sprightly!

Let any one who is an admirer of that popular air, "Home, sweet home," imagine — (no, that is not the word, for he must have heard it a thousand times — let him *remember*) the ambulant performance of the *refrain* "Home, home, sweet, sweet, home," squirted through a husky pan's-pipe, and enforced by five confounded bangs, like so many discharges of artillery, and by five vibrations of all the glass in the parish, which seem to prate of an earthquake! Let him remember the *execution* of "Patrick's day in the morning," covered by an incessant roll of the drum, more appalling than thunder; and concluded with three hard blows that threaten to burst the parchment, and to mislead the hearer into fearing the explosion of a powder-mill.

To ladies in the straw, and to gentlemen with sick headachs, these proceedings are barbarous, cruel, foul, and unnatural. Have the drummers no sympathy for such suffering, or have they no pity on the poor babes, who may be thrown into convulsions by their thumps? Alas! "they have no children, butchers?" and they regard the death of the innocents with hearts of mercenary indifference, which might indeed become a Herod himself.

Not less painful is it to the wounded spirit of the amateur who is full of the melody of the GRAN MAESTRO, to be compelled to endure "thump, thump, thump, thumpy, thumpy, thump," by way of a new edition of "Di tanti palpiti;" or to listen to "*di pia* bang, *mi balza* bang:" it is enough to make a man commit suicide.

Having entered fully into the contemplation of this flagrant wrong, just conceive it, reader, at the end of some forty minutes, melting into distance, and leaving your aching head and jaded ear at liberty, to receive the varied attack of a *debutant*, who, from a garret-window, takes his half-hourly lesson on a key-bugle!! It might reconcile Swift himself to deafness! Not all the alphabets in the world could express the horrible combinations of sound attendant on this truculent massacre of Guido of Arezzo. Astolpho's horn loses all poetical character, in comparison with the reality of that stupifying blast.

Well, you will scarcely have gotten rid of that plague, when you will be beset by a scoundrel performing your last favourite melody on a barrel-organ, in which, if there is one note more out of tune than the rest, it is sure to be that in which there is a long pause, to bring back the *ritournelle*. Verjuice is gracious, when compared to the tooth-edge of that accursed scream!

Then succeeds an itinerant clarionet, squeaking forth the mutilated remains of a Scotch reel, or, worse than all, some Highland Orpheus of a bag-piper, whose villanous pibroch would of itself suffice to batter down the walls of another Jericho, or to relieve the moon from the pangs of an eclipse, "*laboranti poterit succurrere lunæ.*"

In the intervals of this suffering, (if intervals, indeed, it knows) you have the screaming of your neighbour's parrot, the howling of some dog, locked

up for his sins in an empty house; or haply the incessantly renewed attempts of a piping bullfinch to master a tune, of which it has caught only the two first bars; while its mistress, within, is not more successful in triumphing over the difficulties of Moscheles, or of Bochsa!

After such instrumental nuisances, to dwell upon vocal misdoings may smack of the bathos; but the deep, hoarse, bass of the sham sailor, roaring out "Cease, rude Boreas," is not to be passed over; nor the unearthly sounds in which he tells how his "precious sight" was electrified out of his eyes by a West Indian thunder-storm, or carried away by the wind of a cannon-ball.

Then, what think you of a French ballad-singer, with a voice like a penny trumpet, and as tuneable as "a pig in a gate, or a hog in a high wind," chanting "*La garde nationale*," or "*C'est l'amour?*" Or how do you like that other pious nuisance, the woman who lays siege to the halfpence of the saints, by drawling out a never-ending repetition of the hundred and fourth Psalm!

To add to the harmony, these delectable strains are from time to time crossed by the competing discords of two rival mackarel venders, screaming like emulous macaws from the opposite sides of the street; and by the monotonous bell and deep diapason of a stentorian "Dust ho!"

Then, again, at night, you were once indulged with a trio of watchmen, crying the hour concurrently in C natural, C sharp, and E flat, and show-

ing how little concert there was in their efforts to keep the peace. This nuisance is at length abated, but it retains its place in the present enumeration, in order to preserve the memory of a very worthy professor of music, who of himself was "choleric," but whose natural irritability was roused almost to rage, by the slightest deviation from the laws of harmony. Walking home one night from the Opera, he was so worked upon by the discord of "the Charlies," that he actually knocked down the untuneful rogue, nearest at hand, by way of a lesson in counter point. This fantasia of the "enraged musician" brought him to the watch-house till he could get bail; and the next morning Sir R. Birnie read him a most luminous lecture on the moral difference between beating time and beating the time-keeper. Thus brought to the *bar* for an odd *crotchet*, after having lost his *rest*, he was forced, after a most distressing *pause*, to conclude the broken (headed) *cadence*, by sliding a few *notes* into the hand of the guardian of the night, who, being now in the *dominant*, allowed the *discord* to be thus resolved, and brought the guilty one back to the *key*, which was no longer turned against his liberty.

The sensible reader will, by this time, begin to wonder how it has happened that no more than a passing notice has yet been taken of that gigantic acoustic abuse, the bell, or, in the more appropriate language of Othello, "that dreadful bell." The subject was, indeed, too appalling for ordinary nerves!

There is in that one word "bell" such a variety of woes, as is not lightly to be encountered; and even now it is not without reluctance that the pen proceeds to sound the depths of its misery. The erudite inventors of the tragi-comedy of Punch (a performance more true to nature, than any that was ever produced by the disciples of Aristotle) have alone evinced a thorough sense of the atrocity of bells; for after having led that facetious profligate—that immoral preacher of a great moral lesson—through the subordinate gradations of vice, from adultery to murder—they have, as the climax of wickedness, introduced him in the act of ringing a bell in the ears of his neighbours. No other trait that they could have hit upon, could have marked so glaringly the malignity of the man; and, accordingly, it has passed into a proverbial expression: whenever a person has arrived at the excess of any quality—good, bad, or indifferent—he is technically said to "bear the bell," in that particular.

The subject of bells may be conveniently divided into its two branches of venial offences, or hand-bells, and of those mortal sins which exalt themselves in the belfry. Intermediate between these, not long ago, stood the dustman's bell, already mentioned; a sin which, if it was less in magnitude than its clerical brethren, was more atrocious, from its propinquity to the nerves of the sufferers. There was a malice prepense in this same "dust ho!" that demanded immediate castigation. Not contented with a vocal announcement of his calling, which

might awaken all the dust in the parish — the churchyard included — the dustman would pour forth his unceasing peal, to frighten the town from its propriety, without stint or mercy, and in total disregard of the interests of all minor noisemakers; insomuch, that the veriest shrew that ever scolded, would be unable to make herself heard.

Did you ever follow down the Strand one of these *imperturbables*, these implacable persons, unable to get before him, or to retreat from his annoyance, his long whip playing across your eyes, and his virulent clapper splitting the drum of your ear, while your companion in vain endeavoured to make you comprehend some communication of great and urgent interest? If not, you have not experienced suffering in its most exquisite form, suffering to which the inquisition knew no parallel.

In the postman's bell there is a pert flippancy, a jerking reiteration, symbolical of his post haste movements, which is annoying enough; and the humble tinkling of the muffin-man is, (or rather, we must now say, *was*) *pro tanto* a thing to be reformed; but these evils sink into utter insignificance, nay, might be accepted as a boon, in comparison with the deliberate and unpitying continuity of the man of cinders. Even the jangling of tavern bells (never live next door to a tavern), is melody to his music. Thank Heaven, the fellow had no vested interest in his noise, or, at least, he had no parliamentary influence; so that the nuisance is abated, as many more of far wider import must

soon be, unless another revolutionary war should arrive, to drive the nation once more out of its wits, to stop the march of mind, and adjourn for another forty years all chance of improvement.

Of the smaller nuisances, it is a matter of just astonishment how any one could have imagined the tinkling of the sheep-bell a pleasant or a poetical sound, unless, perhaps, the idea arose with some inditer of cockney pastorals, with whom the association of "hot crumpets and muffins" had superseded the physical diagreeableness of that sheepish accompaniment.

Perhaps objection may be taken against this theory, on account of that uniform direction to be found on the hall doors of great men, "knock and ring," an inscription which may be hastily considered as indicating the owner's delight in tintinabulary vibrations; but it should rather seem (remembering the general conduct of masters to servants), that this practice has arisen in a malicious pleasure which they may be imagined to take, in tormenting the sons of the livery. Every one knows that the bell is the torment of a footman's life, and that if it were not for that little instrument, he would be as happy as the day is long: it is clearly, therefore, not the delight of listening to the duet between the knocker and the bell that has occasioned this admonition, but the pleasure of depriving "John" of the satisfaction of letting his master's visiters cool their heels at the door, till it may suit his humour to hear and obey the call.

Passing, however, these petty grievances (thank

Heaven we can no longer say "*de minimis non curat lex*"), without even a conjecture as to the metaphysical causes which have attributed the bell so exclusively to the muffinman, the dustman, and the itinerant coal-merchant (a subject of much delicacy, for which space is here wanting), let us pass at once to the church bell. From this deadly sin there is no hope of relief. He who touches the bell, would shake the establishment. Bells and chimes are part of the wisdom of our ancestors, and to rasp a filing of their brass would bring the constitution about our ears, and put the church into such danger, as would excite Hume and Lord King themselves (were the latter alive) to compassion.

On this subject the author of the "*Moyen de parvenir*" justly remarks, "*J'eusse dit* LE SON, *mais les moines m'eussent accusé d'heresie, par ce que* SON *appartient aux cloches.*"

The ringing of bells is said to be a purely English invention, and it is as sacred as any one of the thirty-nine articles. In vain is the schoolmaster abroad—test acts have been repealed, and Catholics may sit in parliament; but, in the matter of bells, Pandora's box has not even hope left at the bottom.

To the Russell family England is bound in many a debt of gratitude; its best blood, lavished on the scaffold in the cause of liberty, has cemented for ever the alliance of that house with the people; and successive generations of patriots have owned

the influence of the family example. But not the least among its public benefactors was that provident duke, who, in granting the ground for erecting the church of St. George, Bloomsbury, made a saving clause in behalf of the parishioners, that there should be but one bell in the steeple. It is probable, that from this worthy, the house of Russell has inherited its dislike of *church peels*, which they manifest with such earnestness upon all lawful occasions.

That church bells are no real friends of religion it would be easy to prove. The bells of Bow church very nearly pulled that edifice on the heads of the citizens; and the bell of St. Sepulchre's, owing to some defect in its gudgeons, actually did fall with a most ruinous crash.* No wonder then that the "sacring bell" should so have startled the good lord cardinal in his meditations on the coming reformation, as Shakspeare has narrated.

The sound of bells, as heard in the country, and from a distance, is decidedly melancholy; while, in a great city, it is nothing less than stupifying.

* That this was symbolical, the following lines will declare:—

"The bell of St. Sepulchre 's fallen to the ground,
And *never, no more*, will it utter a sound;
The cause of this fall, as most people report it,
Was, that the bell's gudgeons no more could support it.
If this be the truth of the case, in my humble
Opinion, the church runs great risk of a tumble;
For the gudgeons, who long have supported its state,
Are bending beneath its inordinate weight."

How any people could have chosen them as testimonials of rejoicing, or christened their performance "the merry peel," passeth all understanding. Of all the many offences of Catholicism against human happiness, the fondness for bells should lie the most heavily on its conscience. In the monasteries there were no less than six sorts of these tormentors, viz. the *squilla*, which was rung in the refectory. The true character of this bell, maugre its social services, will live for ever in Dante's musical and melancholy line,

"Paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore."

Then there was the *cymbalum* of the cloister, the *nola* of the choir, the *nolula* or *dupla* in the clock (a *striking* impropriety), the *campana** in the steeple, and the *signum* in the tower. To these some authors add the *corregiuncula*, which was used to call the monks to be flogged—an invitation far less agreeable than that of the *squilla*.

Nobody but he who for his sins has sojourned in an Italian town, can have the remotest idea of the devil's symphony, which the rivalry of these many-named abuses creates, at certain hours of the day, ringing, tolling, and chiming in every key, with, generally, one or two of them cracked, for the sake of variety. Even the night, there, is not

* Nola and Campana, so called from Nola, in the Campagna, where these tortures were said to have been originally produced.

sacred to repose; and in most cases the nuisance is increased by the force of contrast,—these noises being the only audible tokens of living humanity heard within the walls.

Like the priests, their masters, the bells have contrived to get into the business of every epoch of existence. Is a child born, away go "the college youths" to work — does he arrive at man's estate, the ding dong is renewed — is he married, ditto repeated — and, lastly, when he dies, the passing bell must frighten all the old folks in the parish, by reminding them of the "*next turn*," which will post them also to another world.

Of all tintinabulary speculations, however, that concerning the passing-bell is the most natural, its object being to drive away the evil spirit standing at the bed's foot in readiness to seize his prey. At the ringing of this bell, we are told, (and 'fore George, I believe it), the devil takes flight; and the soul, like a hunted hare, gains a short start, or in sporting language a law, of which, if it has any agility, it may profit, to distance the enemy, and pop into heaven before it can be overtaken. If anything can frighten a devil, besides holy water, it surely must be the infernal melody of a passing bell. There is no distance which one would not go from it, to be out of ear-shot.

It was probably from this point of church doctrine, that Lord Byron stole his notion of the effect of the Laureate's hexameters, which he has de-

scribed, as possessing a precisely similar diabolifuge operation :—

> " The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell,
> The ghosts fled gibbering to their own dominions."

One consequence of the opinion, extremely agreeable to the sexton is, that an extra sum was usually paid for ringing the great bell, because it drove the devil to a greater distance, and gave a longer start to those whose riches might otherwise have burthened them in their flight. We recommend this hint to the serious consideration of those Act of Parliament gentlemen—the attorneys.

Why bells should be rung on the event of a marriage is less easy to understand, unless it be in a spirit of bitter irony, and as a foretaste of the noise and discord incidental to " God's holy state." On almost every other occasion, bells are the accompaniment of some horror. They are rung in sieges and in fires, they are tolled at funerals and at executions, as if it were not bad enough to be hanged, without having one's courage beaten down by the sound of one's own passing bell. Bells are rung also to commemorate those scourges of nations, miscalled victories, or such public humbugs as gunpowder treason — or that treason without gunpowder, the restoration of the Stuarts.

Bells, likewise, sound to mark the lapse of time, and to announce the slow but certain approach of death. Every stroke of the clapper is a slice off our life; no wonder, then, that it should grate so on the ear!

But, happy is he who has not this unwelcome truth beaten into him by the hammers of a set of musical chimes. The climax of this auricular woe is to be found at Ghent, where the *carillon* is not confined to the performances of the clock, but a *carillonneur* is maintained to torture the ears of the inhabitants. "The carillonneur," says Dr. Burney, "was literally *at work*; and hard work it must be. He was in his shirt, with the collar unbuttoned, and in a violent sweat. There are pedals communicating with the great bells, upon which with his feet he played a bass to several sprightly and rather difficult airs, performed with the hands upon the upper species of keys."

"It is certainly" (I quote the same authority) "a gothic invention, and, perhaps, a barbarous taste." Geminiani said that the Westminster Abbey concerts were good to listen to from Westminster Bridge: but what distance could temper the malice of Burney's *energumène* working *manibus pedibusque*, to drive a whole community mad! Thank Heaven, we have no such *engeance* as this in England; and it is to be hoped that those musical snuff-boxes on the grand scale (the regular chimes) will in time wear out, and leave not a wreck behind.

Another auditory infliction which transcends all powers of description, is the conversion of our best music into quadrille tunes. It is impossible to give the faintest idea of the torture which a genuine

Rossinist endures from these mutilations of the happiest thoughts of the great composer! There is no music which escapes the perverse ingenuity of the dancing master. Even Braham's duet of the "Bird in yonder cage confined" has been *estropié* for the quadrille, in a manner which, to those who do not much care for the original, might convulse them with laughter; so that we may soon expect to dance country dances to Luther's Hymn, to waltz to the Dead March in Saul, and to revive the long minuet, to the tune of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm.

Among the lesser atrocities of domestic life, the creaking boots of a physician, the snarling, snappish bark of a favourite lapdog, or a whistling fellow-lodger, should not be omitted; still less, the nocturnal caterwauling of a convention of amorous cats—a good snorer in the next room—or a bevy of rats practising for the Derby. If you happen to be wakeful, what think you of the ticking of a deathwatch? Or of the pleasures of a neighbouring steam-engine, throwing off newspapers by the thousand for the morning's publication?

But the theme grows too vast for the paper. These are only the coarser and more vulgar ear grievances. No hint has been given of the hopeless misery of solo playing, the crambo of pianoforte concertos, the trumpet accompaniment to "Let the bright seraphim," a *debutante's* "Soldier tired," or that refinement on musical torture, sing-

ings after supper! An ungreased wheel is heaven to the least of these miseries.

Then, there are such things as amateur concerts, exhibiting mothers, and young ladies, who warble of despair and death, with the tame insipidity of sucking doves; who sigh forth, *pianissimo*, the most emphatic "*scelerato*" and "*ingrato*," with their mouths as fast closed, as a dandy's door against the sheriff's officers: and, above all, and beyond all, there are those quintessences of intolerable noise and vulgarity, "Tally ho" and "Old Towler!"

Whoever has considered these things must be convinced, that the ear (at least the musical ear) was not created till after the fall, and that it is among the worst consequences of original sin.

THE ENGLISH MALADY.

"Il y a plus de défauts dans l'humeur, que dans l'esprit."
La Rochefoucauld.

THE English language, amidst its infinite richness and variety, is particularly copious in its expressions for the numerous shades and *nuances* of intellectual and sensitive characteristics. We have fancy, wit, imagination, humour, fun, drollery, apprehensiveness, quickness, &c., for all which the French possess one common and general expression, *l'esprit*—a banality, compelled to do duty on every emergency, alone and unassisted.

By virtue of this copiousness of the mother tongue, philosophy is enabled to distinguish no less than three modifications of that principle of malevolence, which the social man brings to bear against his friends and companions, and which keeps alive a reciprocity of bad feelings among the closest connexions: these are—ill-temper, ill-nature, and ill-humour.

By an ill-tempered man, we mean one who is impatient of trifling annoyances—who is roused by petty provocations to hasty and unmeasured

language, or action, but is generally as easily appeased—his fire, like that of straw, being as evanescent as it is sudden. Such a man, when the corns of his irritability are not trodden upon, may be gay, cheerful, and benevolent: and, if the habit has not been suffered to obtain a mastery, need not be

"Quite a madman, though a pasty fell."

But he is not the less an unsafe companion; and to converse with him is to inhabit over a volcano

An ill-natured man is one who has a perverse pleasure in the misfortunes of his fellow-creatures, who delights in mischief, and enjoys the vexations and disappointments of his neighbours, not because they afford a whimsical point of view, and provoke an involuntary laugh, but precisely because they give pain to the sufferer.

The best-natured man in the world may be amused by the perplexity of a diner-out, who is caught in a beau trap, when "figged out" for the occasion, and hurrying on, at the last moment, in his way towards the friendly mahogany. He may smile at a bungling pretender to the off-edge, who brings his own *sederunt* in contact with the hard ice, with more force than good will. If a plate of hot soup should empty itself on a friend's short tights, rendering it doubtful whether the grease or the caloric constitute the predominant portion of what Jeremy Bentham calls "the matter of punishment," he might even indulge his jocularity,

and sport the "*summum jus summa injuria,*" usual on this emergency; but his mirth would be tempered with a certain sympathy, a friendly apprehension of enhancing the evil, by an appearance of too much gratification.

With the ill-natured man, the pleasure on such occasions is ever measured by the injury of the accident. He would prefer a broken leg to a splashed stocking; a good sound ducking, with danger of life, to a simple fall on the ice; and he would like the soup to scald, and the inexpressibles to be neither cleansible nor replaceable. He chuckles when his friend gains a blank in the lottery, or marries a tartar, or lames a favourite horse, or sees his play damned; exclaiming, "Oh, now he will be taken down a peg!" "Now he will be off his high horse, I warrant!" or the like expression of spite and malicious triumph.

Such a fellow was designed by nature to fill the office of the slave in the conqueror's car, and to damp the gratification of successful merit, by reminding the conqueror of his mortality. Times of public calamity and pecuniary crisis are his harvest-home. The first thing he looks for in the newspaper is the list of bankrupts; and, next to that, he enjoys the personalities and calumnies of faction, slanders, elopements, *crim cons*, or, in general, any show up of human infirmity. He is the first to rip up old stories of failure and disgrace against his equals, who have risen in the world; to "remember the time" when my lord mayor's note

would not discount for twenty pounds; when Sir Somebody Something wore a livery; or to recall the fact, that old Mrs. Graveairs made a slip when she was sixteen, and was stopped by her husband at Dartford, on her way to the Continent, with Captain Lovemore. He sees the judgment of Heaven in every trifling accident, and never loses an opportunity of reading a practical "moral lesson," in order that he may "teach the fellow to know himself."

Very different from these personages is the ill-humoured man. The ill-humoured man may be just, generous, and in all real afflictions compassionate and friendly: nay, he is often *brusque*, to conceal a real tenderness of heart, of which he is ashamed; but, in his ordinary intercourse with society, he overflows with an unceasing stream of bitterness. All his remarks are harsh, severe, and annoying; and in the moments of his relaxation, in the hour of his highest social enjoyment, he is morose, snappish, and provoking.

The ill-humoured man differs from the ill-natured in this, that he does not rejoice at his neighbour's misfortunes, but only takes a momentary pleasure in seeing his friends uncomfortable; and even in this measure of annoyance he has no delight, unless he himself is the author of it. His motive is not malice, but spleen; and he is pleased, not so much that his victim is mortified, as that he is himself relieved from the weight of his own uneasiness. While the ill-tempered man must have

some one to be angry with, the ill-humoured is only at odds with himself; he lacks no external occasion of excitement, nor goes out of himself for the food of his irritability.

This last modification of disposition is decidedly English; and whether it be attributable to *les brouillards d'Angleterre*, to the beef and pudding-izing, the anxious money-getting, or to some other circumstance peculiar to England and Englishmen, it is rarely met with on the Continent, in the same intensity in which it prevails at home. Individuals, indeed, of all nations may be subject to occasional fits of ill-humour; but among Englishmen, almost exclusively, is it ever found as an *état*, a *manière d'être*, clinging to a man at all periods of life, rather exasperated than appeased by prosperity, and unmitigated alike by the successes of love, of vanity, or of ambition.

Ill-humour is less a vice than a disease, for it is strictly constitutional; its occasional paroxysms are rarely brought on by the more serious evils of existence, but rather by certain petty annoyances, which a man of sounder frame of body would laugh at. So the condition itself does not appear to depend upon any notable or tangible malady, but arises from some obscure hitch, or embarrassment, in the more intimate movements of the body, which, without tending to sickness or dissolution, is destructive of that diffusive animal pleasure, derived in happier constitutions from the mere sentiment of existence. It should seem as if, in persons thus

put together, the several capillary systems were so many fountains of irritation, from which an accumulated torrent of inappreciable impressions flow in upon the sensorium, without indeed engendering direct pain, but yet fretting the disposition "like a gummed velvet," and throwing the mind upon the external world, in search of those causes of uneasiness, which in reality are internal.

"The humours of the body," says a moral writer, "imperceptibly influence the will, so that they enter, for a large part, into all our actions, without our being aware of it;" and thus it is that the ill-humoured man punishes, in his friends, the outrages of some peccant lymph, circulating in his own veins; and revenges himself nobly on society, for the offences of his own liver and pancreas. Accordingly it happens, that a severe fit of illness, and its concomitant medical treatment, will for a while abate considerably from this congenital disease of the mind, by exchanging the *malaise* of the body for a good substantial pain, and changing the habitual current of the humours. So, on the other hand, a striking calamity, a fire, the death of a friend, or a heavy pecuniary loss, by calling off the attention of the ill-humoured man from trifling sensations, will render him, for a season, more civilized and amenable in society; and he will not lose this temporary good-nature, until time and philosophy have restored his ordinary tone of spirits.

The prevalence of this peculiarity of disposition,

is a great defect in the national character; not only as it occasions much unhappiness in families, but as it bespeaks an equal uneasiness in the subject; for it never can exist, in concurrence with an habitual relish and enjoyment of life. The happy are ever pleased with the happiness of others, and prompt to promote it: but the miserable feel insulted, as well as shocked, by the aspect of enjoyment, with which they cannot sympathize.

Notwithstanding the oft-quoted "*haud ignora mali*," it is unmitigated suffering, much more than boundless prosperity, that hardens the heart, and begets a churlish and unsociable spirit. The morosity of the English character impresses foreigners with most unfavourable notions of the country and its institutions, and has contributed to reconcile them to their native despotisms, by forcing on their attention the little real enjoyment which subsists in the land of liberty.

Ill-humour vents itself in a thousand ways. An ill-humoured man sits in the bosom of his family (like a spider in the centre of its web,) in watchful and unceasing grudge against all around him. No sooner does a burst of cheerfulness explode in his presence, than he hastens to repress it, by a sarcasm or a rebuke. He studies the weaknesses of his friends, in order to play upon them with more effect; and, as the hackney-coachman "makes a raw" on his horse's shoulder, in order to flog the callous animal to a better purpose, so the ill-natured man delights to irritate an outraged

feeling, to play upon an imperfection; and, in one word, to say to every individual the most galling and vexatious things that occur to his recollection.

The great pretext for this cantankerous indulgence is, that the party loves to speak his mind. He, forsooth, is a plain, downright man, who always utters what he thinks; and he is too good an Englishman to make cringes and congees, like a foreigner. Nothing can be more thoroughly detestable than these provoking truth-tellers; and a man might almost as soon live with the father of lies himself (provided he might choose the *venue* of the habitation) as associate with these very candid and very impertinent companions; who, after all, differ from their continental neighbours less, perhaps, in the love of speaking their thoughts, than in not thinking with satisfaction on any subject.

The worst of it is, that these "cross gentlemen" (to use the designation by which an Irish waiter distinguished a certain pettish, unpleasable traveller, with whose name he was not acquainted,*) have now and then so many compensating qualities, so much friendship, so much benevolence, that you cannot, for the soul of you, bring yourself to a dead cut. For the ill-humoured man may at bottom be very good-natured; and it sometimes happens that he who never said one gracious and agreeable word in his whole life, has never lost an opportunity

* "A beef-steak and a pint of port for the cross gentleman in the Lion," was his expression.

of doing a real and substantial service to the objects of his perpetual annoyance.

Sir Simon Verjuice is strictly a man of this description. His highly respectable life of industry and integrity, his family affection, and active friendship, conspire to redeem his social defects, and to license to the uttermost his indulgence in the Anglican privilege of finding fault and snappishness. He will tell a woman in a large and mixed circle that she is painted, that her wig is awry, or that her jewelry is false. He will make a fond mother miserable, by calling her husband's attention to the faults of her favourite boy, whom her mismanagement has spoiled, or by vehemently asserting that her daughter's shoulder is growing out. He tells scandalous anecdotes of the popular patriot, to jeer his radical acquaintance; and will abuse sectarianism to a Dissenter. He has all sorts of gloomy predictions at the service of all his acquaintance; and when, half-joke, half-earnest, he tells his neighbour that he will live to be hanged, he takes little pains to conceal his private opinion that the party may richly deserve it. If you have a spot on your cheek, he will tell you that it is the evil; if your wife coughs, he will abruptly warn you that she is far gone in a galloping consumption. If you indulge in any little expense, he will reproach you with ruining your family, and he will tell you that you see better company, and give yourself greater airs, than is good for your credit.

All proffered civilities Verjuice rejects in the

most disgracious manner. If you offer him a place in your carriage, he tells you he is not too old to walk. If you propose to him some delicacy of the table, "he is no epicure." If you yield him the arm chair, or a place next the fire, "he is not sick." Thus he gives you ground for believing that your motive is suspected, when he is only vexed at being ousted, for a while, of his right to be surly. So, on the other hand, his first word to every request is "No;" and though he never fails to serve, when it is in his power, he as seldom grants a favour, till he has quoted every reason he can find, or invent, to warrant his refusal. Remonstrate with him on the rudeness of his speech, and tell him that he has hurt such a man's feelings, his constant answers are, "what do I care?" "Why is he such a fool as to mind it?" "Is it not the truth!—and if he is ashamed to hear the truth, why does he not mend his conduct?"

After all, however, Verjuice is a much more tolerable companion than his sister; first, because she is a woman, and therefore dares be much more savage; and next, because she is an old maid, and adds some grains of ill-nature to her inborn ill-humour; but, most of all, because she has seen less of the world, is more full of herself, and is essentially less indulgent to the infirmities of her friends and acquaintances. *He* taunts you with a weakness or an absurdity, simply because his pettishness finds an account in doing so; *she* indulges in this liberty, for the same reason; and also, because she

thinks unnecessarily ill of you, on account of that weakness. With as much bile, she has more genuine malignity; and to her constitutional waspishness, she adds all the sourness of disappointment. Miss Verjuice entertains a thousand petty jealousies of the neglect of friends. Herself the centre of her own circle, she can ill brook the eccentric movements of those who are sometimes influenced by other attractions, and dare to omit her in a dinner-party, or to withhold an expected visit. This feeling is still deeper, if the person in whose favour she is passed by, is one step higher in life, or has any advantage at her disposition, which she herself cannot boast.

These feelings are but too common with all who have not *l'usage du monde*, but with the good-natured and the good-humoured they are transitory; or, at worst, self-respect and an honest pride lead such persons to keep the offence to themselves. Miss V., on the contrary, never lets slip an opportunity of "telling her friends a piece of her mind;" and would think herself a dupe, if she forgot her imaginary grievance without what she calls asserting herself — that is, reproaching her visitors with all their arrears of expected civilities.

To her servants, or *of* them, she never speaks but to find fault; and, unlike her brother, she does not redeem this vice by a generous regard of their worldly interests. This is the more intolerable, because her servants are a favourite topic of conversation for the amusement of her guests. In the

country she is the scourge of her poor neighbours; abusing the men for idleness, the wives for sluttishness, and the children for their dirty faces, and not saying their Catechism. Her own nephews and nieces she keeps in incessant hot water, by reminding them, *àpropos des bottes*, of their old offences, and reading them *improviso* lessons before strangers. "How do you do, Mrs. Fizackerley? That's my niece, madam, Miss Clementina Verjuice, a good girl, if she would but hold up her head, and would not pull faces. That young gentleman in the corner is her brother Harry. Come here, sir. Why don't you comb your hair? He chose to spoil his best trousers by falling in the mud and tearing the knees; so he must be content to go on with his old ones."

All the while poor Mrs. Fizackerley sits bored to death, either by no means interested in the qualities of Miss Clementina and Master Harry, or if she be a foolish mother herself, applying to her own conduct all the inuendoes against the torment of rude children, and the folly of "sparing the rod to spoil the child."

These pettish attacks are not confined to the children; all her acquaintance come in for their share. She is the censor-general of fashions and morals, of caps and carriage, of bonnets and behaviour: not that she always ventures to be directly personal; a diatribe on a general proposition will equally serve her turn. If a lady's stays happen to be cut rather low, she wonders how modest women

can bring themselves to the fashion of showing their bosoms to every jackanapes. If the curate rides a good horse, she rails against the category of sporting parsons; or if he preaches morality, she declaims against Arminianism, and vows that the clergy have quite forgotten their theology. On these occasions, too, "some people" is a favourite figure of speech; and, "I wonder what folks mean," is an ally on whose services she largely draws, when she wants to give what she calls "*a good wipe.*"

Among better bred persons ill-humour does not, of course, wear this extreme shape of impertinent selfishness; it is softened down and subdued by an acquaintance with good company. But where the morosity exists, it finds a no less effective vent in a *morgue*, which is scarcely less annoying. The assumption of airs of state and distance in the bosom of the domestic circle is a remain of feudal barbarism, which has been preserved longer and more rigidly in England than in the other countries of Europe. Formerly the children were not suffered to eat at the same table with their parents, or to sit in their presence; and much of the spirit of this formality is still preserved in our modern habits, through the incurable ill-humour of the heads of families. Fathers, infected with this vice, sit in the midst of their little ones wrapped up in a silent abstraction; and they repress by a frown or a rebuke every approach to an affectionate familiarity; while the mother incessantly reminds her

children, that "when she was young, girls were not suffered" to do this or the other.

This carriage towards the objects of affection, while it is the grave of confidence and filial affection, is utterly incompatible with domestic cheerfulness. When brought to bear upon general society, it is an effectual damper of the ease and comfort of the guests, and as completely destroys all pleasurable company as the acrimony of the Verjuices.

But by far the more frequent refuge of genuine ill humour in high life is found in a pretence to sanctimonious rigour of exterior, in a scrupulosity of piety, which looks down on music, abhors dancing, and holds every idle word, or unquestioned thought, as a sin of the blackest die. A watchful look-out after the soul's health in others, is the most plausible pretext imaginable for tormenting and harassing; and a zeal for religion affords the most decent excuse for every peevish inroad upon the cheerfulness of society. "*Que ferons nous de nos domestiques ce carême?*" said a French female pietist to her friend; and the answer of the friend was, "*nous les ferons jeuner.*"

Too much of this ill-humoured spirit, it is to be feared, lurks at the bottom, not only of the domestic dulness of the over-righteous, but of our more public invasions of the Sunday hilarity of the lower orders. If we are indeed, as we pretend, the most religious people of Europe, it will be well if our piety be not found a consequence of our being,

at the same time, the most ill-humoured. Certain it is, that whether we look into the parlour, the nursery, or the servants' hall—whether we examine the dinner party, or the domestic circle — whether we follow the people into their interior, or accompany them to their public amusements, there is in England infinitely less cheerfulness, good-humour, and ease, in our social intercourse, than are displayed in that of any other branch of the European family.

LIBERALITY.

"Ces services que nous leurs rendons sont, à proprement parler, un bien que nous faisons à nous mêmes par avance."

La Rochefoucauld.

The selfish origin of our most generous affections is a proposition, which, however revolting to human vanity, has found its way into favour. Twist and turn the matter as we may, "to this conclusion must we come at last," that the benevolent man and the self-centred knave, both alike, do that which (every thing considered) they like best; and in so doing, only follow their own dispositions, and gratify themselves.

If there be any one who imagines that humanity gains by the attempt to add a cubit to this their moral stature, they are welcome to the error; and may bring their metaphysics to bear upon the point, in any way that gives them the most satisfaction. Their illusion, if it be one, is an amiable illusion; and, to say the worst of it, it can do no harm. But, whatever such persons may

think of generosity in the abstract, and of the motives which govern the species at large, the hardiest advocate for the divinity of human nature among them must admit that all is not gold that glitters, and that a great deal of the liberality which passes muster in the world is, at bottom, no better than it should be.

We English, in particular, set up large claims to this virtue, both in matters of opinion and of money: but, if the truth may be spoken without offence, no small part of it is pretty much of the same quality, as that of the French bishop, of whom it was said that "*il donnera plutôt un écu à une garce, qu'un denier à un pauvre.*" In this our shopkeeping habits combine with a gentle leaning to hypocrisy; producing that curious moral entity, proverbially called "a generous churchwarden," who keeps the silver and gold collected at the church door for himself, and gives the halfpence to the poor.

Of these, Heaven knows we have too many, in all ranks and conditions of society. Not exactly that they transfer the gold and silver directly from the plate to their breeches-pocket, so as to subject themselves to the animadversion of my lords, the judges; but they do not the less cause those metals to find their way to the same destination, by certain roundabout by-paths, which, however devious their meanders, all arrive at the same identical duplicature of the nether integuments. With a somewhat similar spirit, is distributed what is

called justice; the law being nominally open to all, though in reality it is sold in the very teeth of the "*nulli vendemus*" clause of the great charter, and sold, too, at a higher rate, than it may be purchased from the most rascally bashaw in Turkey. Any man, it is true, may sue in *formâ pauperis*, if it be possible that he who is so destitute as to come within the terms of the court's generosity, could possess a right of any sort to defend: and there are plenty of briefless barristers who will liberally plead for the pauper client, in order to show their zeal and capacity for business to the attorneys. So, also, physicians and surgeons are eager candidates to do the very laborious duties of a great hospital gratuitously, in order to make a connexion; and rising young apothecaries open domestic dispensaries, to "try their 'prentice hand" on the poor, and to get in with parish officers and good ladies, who sometimes take physic themselves. Truly, these are liberal professions!

Such persons, indeed, are by no means to blame in this matter; nor do they often fail in exercising their functions with as much industry and humanity as is necessary to the establishment of a professional reputation. The national charity forces this duty on the profession, and its members must submit (however hard and unjust) to the necessity imposed upon them: but the liberality, "*de part et d'autre*," does not the less enter into the general catalogue of fudges and humbugs.

The clergy, for their part, (all due allowance

being made for honourable exceptions) are not behindhand with their lay brethren in this species of generosity. They support all the charitable institutions that are patronized by their bishop, or recommended by the fashion of the day; and, their predecessors having appropriated to themselves and to their successors for ever, that portion of the ecclesiastical revenue which was originally destined to relieve the distresses of their parishioners, they are, doubtless, as a body sufficiently liberal with their "farthings to the poor." They subscribe, also, largely to all institutions calculated to uphold their political supremacy, and to make inroads on the Dissenters; and to every public object by which they can prove their "right thinkingness," and their fitness for promotion.

The members of Parliament are, in their way, also, a most liberal body; and on the eve of an election, subscribe handsomely to all the charities of the place they would represent. The sums of money they give to poor voters often almost ruin them; and so truly charitable are they in these donations, that they take the utmost care that their left hand should not know what their right doeth; for nothing would so much mortify them, as to have their liberality talked of in an election committee.

But to leave these somewhat invidious class-doings, and to come to something more sweeping and conclusive, the English are the only people on the face of the earth who publish their alms-giving

in the newspapers, and advertize to all whom it may or may not concern, the pounds sterling bestowed upon distressed widows, or the victims of calamitous fires; just as if the founder of their religion had never directly forbidden such childish ostentation!

Next to the pleasure of seeing one's name in the diurnal rubricks of opulence and piety, there is no self-seeking motive that stimulates liberality more effectively than sheer gluttony. Whenever it suits a man's account to get up some new public charity, to manufacture some untried eleemosynary speculation, he has nothing better to do than to bait his trap with a dinner at the Freemasons'; or the Crown and Anchor. The good Samaritans will be sure to flock in crowds, to pour oil and wine into —their own stomachs; and if, when "hot with the Tuscan grape," they bleed freely, their maudlin good-nature passes current for a charitable disposition; and they take free credit with Heaven for a pecuniary advance, the real motive of which is far less a sympathy with their fellow-creatures, than an affection for calipash and cold punch.

This trap, however, is so far defective, that it embraces only one half of the creation. The fair sex are excluded from public dinners; and to draw in the ladies, it is necessary to have recourse to charity balls, benefit plays, and concerts. It is inconceivable how much is expended in this mock-species of liberality, by which charity is served only

in the smallest proportions. Fairly stated, the account would stand very nearly in this way:

	£	s.	d.
To a new dress for attending the charity . .	10	10	0
To hair-dressing, ribbon, gloves, &c.	1	10	0
To musicians, lights, refreshments, &c. &c. &c.	0	10	6
To actual charity, (the ticket being £1 1s.) .	0	10	6
	£13	1	0

"Oh! monstrous! but one halfpenny worth of bread to all this intolerable deal of sack." It is not to be denied that this expenditure is what is called "good for trade," (that is, it forces many to make large expenditures, which they cannot afford, and, therefore, to go in debt;) that it circulates a great deal of money, and sometimes cheats those into a little charity, who would not bestow a farthing on the poor for their own sake: but, then, let it not be placed to the score of national liberality, and blazoned in the eyes of Europe, as a proof of the superior benevolence of the people.

But false and fictitious as such pretensions to charity may be, they are milk and honey, when compared with another species of liberality, exclusively English, in which proselytism "gives ere charity begins." These only set forth acts as virtues, which are purely indifferent; but sectarian liberality is a wolf in sheep's clothing, concealing, under the garb of benevolence, as much rancour and selfishness, as can well enter into the heart of man. This malady in the moral constitution shows

itself in the distribution of shillings and sermons, of trowsers and tracts, of flannel and foolishness. In Ireland it extends its generosity to *educating*, that is, frightening out of their religion the Catholic poor *vi et armis*, in separating parent and child, and in calumniating every scheme of instruction which respects liberty of conscience.

In England such conduct is but folly—in Ireland it arrives at the dignity of crime; for its aim is nothing less than universal supremacy. Proselyting liberality is marked by all the *patelinage* and prying curiosity of Jesuitism, by the Jesuit's love of domination, and by his wriggling, insinuating modes of influence and persuasion. Under the notion of a regard for the spiritual welfare of the village, the Lady Bountifuls of this class become mistresses of all its secrets, and hold the strings of all its little intrigues. They thus gratify at the same time their love of scandal, and their lust of power. They contrive to occupy a burthensome leisure, to banish the ennui of their splendid idleness; and they secure for themselves an imaginary place in Paradise, all for a few pounds sterling *per annum*. Leigh Hunt has somewhere called this procedure by the very appropriate appellation of other-worldliness, considering it as nothing better than what the doctors would call misplaced avarice, as a result of the same sordid selfishness which delights in a miserly accumulation of sublunary wealth.

Cobbett, too, has touched the point, in some one of his multitudinous writings, with his usual coarse

acuteness. "When persons," he says, "are glutted with riches, when they are surfeited of all earthly pursuits, they are very apt to begin to think of the next world; and the moment they begin to think of that, they begin to look over the account they shall have to present. Hence the far greater number of what are called 'charities.'"

Combining a donation for God's sake with the conversion of a stray sheep, is clearly killing two birds with one stone, and is a more economical investment on *post-obit* security, than that which looks only to the temporal wants of a fellow-creature.

Where religious charity ends, political charity begins; which is a bird pretty much of the same feather. In its worst form, political charity goes directly to subdue the lower orders, and to keep them in chains: at best, it is but the movement of minds ashamed of the evils of bad government, but without the honesty or the energy requisite for rectifying the abuses out of which bad government arises. To legislate wisely and largely is troublesome, and it requires knowledge as well as virtue; but nothing is more amusing, easy, and flattering to self-love, than a round of impertinent interference with the domestic concerns of the lower orders, made in the awkward attempt to find palliatives for misrule, and to conciliate oppression and injustice with a wholesome condition of the society in which they flourish.

The true spirit of this pettifogging and soup-shop

liberality is evinced in the best eleemosynary articles which pass by the name of education. Small, indeed, are the gratuitous attempts to make the poor really wiser or better, to uphold that independence of spirit which is the root of all moral excellence, or even to facilitate the application of industry to the greatest supply of the animal and social wants. The education which directs the poor along the state highway to heaven, and makes them prostrate before their superiors, is bestowed in abundance; but that which would ameliorate their condition in this world is not only withheld, but is denounced as dangerous and treasonable. The education given about the time of the Reformation, (if we may judge by its consequences,) was infinitely more honest.

Amidst all the boasted liberality of the rich, and all their affected zeal for their dependents, they practise every art, legislative and administrative, to keep wages low, that is, to render the poor ignorant and wretched. "If," says Place,* "the rich will not submit to the slightest inconvenience necessarily attendant on what they profess to desire, they cannot be in earnest in their professions. Their benevolence to the poor must be either childish play or hypocrisy; it must either be to amuse themselves, or to pacify the minds of the common people with a mere show of attention to their wants. To wish to better the condition of the poor, by enabling them to command a greater quantity of the neces-

* On Population.

saries and comforts of life, and then to complain of high wages, is the act of a silly boy, who gives his cake, and then cries for it."

True liberality, the only liberality worthy of the name, is that which is founded in justice. The rest is but the benevolence of the hard-hearted creditor, who, having shut up his debtor between four walls, generously bestows on him the bread and water which saves him from starvation. But an enlarged liberality, dictated by pure philanthropy, answers not the purpose of politicians.

"Mere honest justice suits not with their zeal,
A warmer glow the sons of Plutus feel;
So tame, so flat a virtue feeds not pride,
Nor throws the ravished gate of heaven wide:
And, what's far worse, on earth it is no tool,
It wins not place, distinction, wealth, nor rule.
No; placed in leading-strings, the poor must know
Nor good nor ill, save as their teachers show,
Who make a despotism of heav'n, to prove
That tyrants are a sort of earthly Jove,
And place a demon on th' eternal throne,
To justify, by his defects, their own."*

Nearly related to this religious and political liberality, and directed generally to the same ends, is the active, meddling, fussy, much-ado-about-nothingness, which displays itself in the superintendence of bazaars, the manufacture of pasteboard and paper ornaments, the netting of purses, and the fabric of baby-linen, to be sold for the benefit of some pet schoolhouse, or some fashionable cha-

* Unpublished Poem.

rity. There is the same massacre of time, the same conceit, the same forcing into evidence in an interesting and becoming attitude, and the same interference with matters beyond the sphere, and above the comprehension of the actors. There is, moreover, a very pretty commodity of coquetry and flirtation, which, to ladies who have passed Lord Byron's "certain time of life," is not without its interest.

If pity be akin to love, charity cannot be very distantly related to it; and, right or wrong, a woman is never so attractive as when her sympathies are warmly engaged, no matter for what. To those, even, with whom "Love's dream is o'er," there is no small triumph in a successful effort to wheedle large sums from the customer, and in making, by force of smiles and insinuations, some simpleton pay a guinea for a gewgaw not worth a shilling. The bazaar ladies, however high their birth and station, understand the tricks of trade as well as the professional higgler. God help any *poor* gentlefolks, whose evil destiny may lead them on a country visit to these rich inutility brokers! It were cheaper to dine at the Clarendon, or to sup at Crockford's.

Rich people have no notions of the value of money (especially ladies), nor can they enter into the wants of others, in which they do not themselves share. To say nothing of the bore of being hurried from the girls' school to the spinners and knitters, and from these to the lace-makers and the basket-

weavers, you are compelled by common courtesy to buy stockings which you will never wear, to purchase baskets which you can never fill, and to give more for your lace than it would cost at Howell's and James's.

The fees to servants are hard enough in all conscience upon the humble friends of great families; but, when the mistress has her perquisites also, no limited purse can stand it. Dirty suspicions are hateful enough; and an honest man always thinks worse of himself when they cross his imagination; but it is difficult always to help thinking that some, at least, of these fancy dealers in charity count like the hackney-coachman, "one shilling for master, and two for myself."

In its direct influence on the poor, for whose presumed benefit such speculations are undertaken, this is indeed no laughing matter. It is incontestable that numbers of helpless girls, whose industry was their only resource against want and infamy, are thrown out of employment by bazaars, repositories, and ladies' committee-shops, stocked by the strenuous idleness of amateur sempstresses, and embroiderers for the love of God. Many also are the tradesmen, who, having paid heavy rents and taxes, on the faith of public encouragement, find their counters deserted, in favour of the underselling charity shops, by the lovers of piety and great bargains, who flock in crowds to purchase for the conversion of Jews and Hindoos, or to speed the missionary "from Indus to the pole."

The quantity of labour which the public can feed is a fixed datum, and not a farthing can be bestowed on the knicknacks of lady workmanship, without throwing some one out of employment; but when the works offered for sale are objects of utility—shirts, caps, dressing-gowns, &c.—the collision with pauper industry is still more direct and mischievous. This reflection may be below the consideration of those superlatively good people, who consider the poor less as objects of sympathy, than as the instruments for working out their own proper salvation; but to such as can feel for a fellow man, and who would scarcely purchase heaven itself at the price of human suffering, the fact is important.

That there is much genuine charity in England, would be folly to deny. A population so abounding in wealth cannot but be more indifferent to small sums than communities, which are less at their ease. The middle classes (which in all countries are the most charitable, because they are placed sufficiently near to poverty to understand and feel for its distresses, while they possess the pecuniary means of some indulgence of benevolent feeling), are moreover, in England, a numerous and thriving portion of the population. Their virtue, besides, is fostered by the public spirit, which the popular forms of the British constitution necessarily develop; and the very fact of an inordinate pretence to eleemosynary munificence tends to increase the actual practice of an unselfish charity.

But from this pure and unmixed benevolence, a very large discount must be taken; for much credit should not be given for the easy virtue of parting with superfluous coin, when the act is not accompanied by a corresponding liberality of opinion. As long as there is little that is generous and enlarged in the mind, pecuniary largess can be justly regarded but as a monkish virtue. When we find the same people, who rushed forward to subscribe three hundred thousand pounds for the relief of the starving Irish, perpetuating the causes of the distress which their charity alleviates, by upholding successive Irish administrations in every species of misrule and oppression—admiration becomes converted almost into disgust, at the obvious inconsistency.

One knows not also whether to smile or to weep over that animal instinct of compassion, which responds to the spectacle of physical suffering, while it coolly consigns a fellow-creature to eternal misery for a slight difference of creed; and then strips him of his civil rights, on the strength of this inconsiderate condemnation.*

There is likewise among the upper classes a haughty insolence and contempt of the people,

* The passing of the Catholic Relief Bill might have become a means of abating this national bigotry, but bigotry has only shifted its ground. It is still found convenient to exploit the religious ill-temper of England, and to make the habits of superstitious fear, too deeply rooted in the national character, the ready instrument of political humbug.

which detracts from the merit of their compassion, as being utterly inconsistent with a liberal mind, and as, in reality, producing an infinity of misery, for which their bounty (were they to give their whole estates to the poor) would be but a small compensation. There is little intrinsic difference between the Blunts, who "damn the poor," because "Heaven cannot love the wretch it starves," and the charitable great, who found almshouses, yet grind the labourer wholesale, by oppressive and monopolizing laws.

"To be liberal in money," says an author of much originality, "deserves little praise, compared with liberality of sentiment; the one frequently arises from ostentation and vanity—the other can only be the result of a cultivated mind and a generous heart: for it respects the feelings, prejudices, and sufferings of others; it pays many debts, which are not strictly obligations of justice; it supplies the defects of law; and where all other motives cease to operate, liberality enjoins purity in our own conduct, and that candid interpretation in other men's, which, more than all our virtues, tends to sweeten and adorn society." *

In this liberality the English nation as yet has made little progress; the insular situation of the people, and their tradesman's habits, are both against

* "Materials for Thinking," by W. Burdon. Vol. i. The scope of this paper, it is hoped, will not be taken as a breach of such "candid interpretation." It attacks vices in categories, not in persons.

it; but the greatest obstacle to the development of this virtue lies in the corrupt and exclusive character, which has grown upon their political institutions. From the combination of these causes, there is little expansive in the thoughts, feelings, or habits of the genuine John Bull. We are not only damnatory in our religion, but are continually splitting into categories and predicaments, and shutting ourselves up in clubs and *coteries*, on all manner of pretences. Each of these looks on the rest of the species as knaves or fools, if not as heretics and idolaters. The persecutions of fashion, if milder in degree, are not less narrow and bigoted than those of divinity; and the Lady Patronesses of Almack's black-beaned the deficient in *bon ton*, exactly on the same principle, on which orator Irving sent poets and reviewers to the regions of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

In a similar spirit, corporations protect themselves and their apprentices from rivalry. The Clapham householders too, who keep their carriages, refuse to fraternize with those of their neighbours, who travel daily "from the Bank" in the stage-coach or the omnibus. Mrs. Grundy, who inhabits a "genteel apartment," maintains her superiority over Mrs. Soapsuds, who is so very "low," as to keep a shop. With equal liberality the officer of cavalry looks down on the captain of a marching regiment; and he of the line pays off the account, by a corresponding disdain of the commander of militia-men.

To the same narrow-mindedness belongs the rigorous exclusion of strangers from public libraries, or the inconvenient and jealous terms on which they are admitted. We trace it also in the fees exacted on the visitors of public buildings and collections, and it reigns paramount over the sporting grounds of country squires.

There is not the slightest grain of liberality in the insolence, coldness, and paltry suspicion, with which a true Bull treats all foreigners, but such as come over to sing for his amusement, or are marked with that seal of all merit, a feudal title. There is not a spark of true generosity in the base envy and remorseless sarcasm, with which too many Englishmen regard the rising prosperity of our brethren in the United States.

These, and a thousand other similar traits of character, prove that the nation has yet many steps to make, before it escapes from barbarism. "To acquire sentiments of liberality is not the work of a day nor a month, but of years; they are, generally, the fruit of early instruction; for those opinions which we acquire in our youth, make the deepest impression, and are longest retained."*

It may be doubted whether liberality is not, in some degree, even an affair of temperament, and whether there are not minds which no education could expand; but the liberality of nations is certainly the slow growth of combined prosperity and

* Burdon.

education; and, as it is the fruit, so it is the test of civilization. The multitudes of vulgar-minded Englishmen, who flocked to the Continent after the general peace, betrayed the secret of our weakness in this point to foreigners, and forfeited much of the high character which our public acts and commercial integrity had won for the nation. The imputed generosity of Englishmen, which caused their simplest gentlemen to be esteemed above the princes of other countries, has been effaced from the imaginations of our neighbours, not more by the petty haggling and chicanery in the settling of tradesmen's bills, than by our illiberal and insulting views of the institutions and habits of the natives at large. The fear of being cheated has made our travellers little better than cheats themselves; but the aristocratic morgue, the running after great men, and the Protestant bigotry of the majority of the "English abroad," have gone further still to abate that admiration, which the valour, resources, and power of the nation had inspired, at the successful termination of a war unparalleled in history.

Now all this, though strictly true, is not the less atheism, jacobinism, radicalism, and every other *ism*, rheumatism included; yet it is not the fault of the writer, more than it is of the actors of such things, that the English are a nation of shopkeepers; or that aristocracy in the constitution, and ascendency in religion, bequeathed to us by generations less enlightened than our own, have done our natural dispositions so much mischief.

If these things are hinted to our beloved countrymen, it is in the strictest confidence, and should go no further; still less would we be willingly suspected of the slightest desire to reform. It is not asked, that Englishmen should practise all the virtues they profess; but it might be as well, if they rendered their little peccadilloes less salient, by abstaining from such very barefaced boasting—and if, when they are disposed to amuse themselves by lauding the liberality of their own opinions, and the generosity of their own dealings, either at home or abroad, they confide these overflowings of the heart to the family circle, or to some confidant more discreet than the reeds of Midas's barber.

MEMOIRS OF THE MACAW OF A LADY OF QUALITY.

DICTATED BY HIMSELF,

AND EDITED BY LADY MORGAN.

One of the most striking ridicules of that "biped without feathers"—man—is the self-sufficiency with which he appropriates to himself the highest qualities of creation. He alone, in his own estimation, has intellectual powers; he alone is a thinking, talking, laughing, crying animal, and reasons, abstracts, and is possessed of a soul for the sublime and beautiful! After thirty years' intercourse with this conceited jackdaw of humanity, in both his extremes of civilization, I have not been able to discover the slightest evidence of this boasted superiority, I will not say over the parrot, but over the lowest animal in the ranks of ornithology. The other day, at one of my lady's blue parties, I heard a profound physiologist confess that the whole is a mere question of structure, and that the only difference between man and macaw

lies in the bumps and depressions, and the *poco meno* and *poco piu* of the nervous system. "They have both," he said, "passions, perceptions, appetites, impulses; and the vices and crimes of both are pretty much on a par." This was all very well; but, notwithstanding such resemblances, we natives of the tropics are still the master-works of nature; and it would take some trouble to convince me that there is not more than a formal difference between a parrot, and the most giddy, inconsistent, and (by fits and starts) the most lunatic animal, in the whole organised creation.

The parrot tribe, of which we macaws are the natural aristocracy, have, it must be acknowledged, some qualities, not of the most amiable kind, in which we approach towards human nature. Like man, social and gregarious, we are noisy, pert, and clamorous in society; and every individual of the community wishes to be heard above all his fellows. We love and hate from selfishness or caprice; and we are as jealous of the favours of our mistress, as an intriguing mamma is of the ball-room preferences of a titled dandy. Rapid in our perceptions, we are (like man) almost always false in our conclusions. We go on, mimicking in gesture, and reiterating in sound, all that we see and hear; and we repeat the nonsense that has passed for truth on the foolish world for ages, with such an oracular air, that we might be mistaken for Solons and Bossuets, in half the private circles and public assemblies which occupy the attention of human society.

I remember, one evening, being in an excellent humour in my lady's conservatory (behind the pink boudoir, so well known in the world of fashion,) and talking away in the most fluent and emphatic manner to an auditory of birds and butterflies, real and artificial, when some person in the adjoining room exclaimed, "Is that Sir C. W. practising for the house?" "No, no," said another; "it is the popular preacher rehearsing his next Sunday's discourse on the beauties of church establishments." The fact is, that I had picked up in my lady's salon so much of the jargon of *bon ton* sentiment, moral, religious, and political, that the mistake was not unnatural; for my ordinary discourse is very much made up of the most select and admired passages (which are repeated from mouth to mouth) from the maiden speeches, splendid replies, and able statements of both Houses of Legislature, intermingled with scraps of pulpit oratory, table-talk, and "leading articles" of the day, which form the current circulation of all fashionable assemblies.

But our resemblance to man does not stop here. Mischievous from vengeance, or from idleness, we commit every species of devastation; yet, like the favourites of human society, we redeem all our vices by the amusement we afford, and the ennui we dissipate. Hating our own species for their success, and ambitious to climb or creep into favour with those who assume a mastery over us, we have all the pride and baseness of humanity, in its highest social perfection. In one particular, how-

ever, our superiority to man is decided. We are no hypocrites; and we never stoop to lie.

In our locomotive faculties, also, our pre-eminence is incontestable; and to what purpose should a greater facility of motion be conferred on us, if our perceptions were not keener, our desires more varied, and our volitions more sublime and intense, than those of the living clod of the valley, who presumes to dispute with us in intelligence and thought? But though we talk as well as the human species, we are held to talk only at random! All our best hits must needs be nothing better than lucky accidents! Who told *them* this? Who could give *them* the slightest information of our moral organization? Was it Doctor Kennedy, or Mr. Brook who dissected my old friend, the far-famed parrot of Colonel O'Kelly?

Those learned anatomists tell us that they found the muscles of his larynx (like those of Signor Strillaforte, who was cut up about the same time by Sir A. Carlisle,) to be enormously developed by practice. But where are their phrenological observations? It does not follow that there was a whit the less meaning in the *gorgheggiamenti* of the Signor, or in the chatter of poor Poll, than in any given oration of a minister of finance; or that if certain human heads that I know were cultivated to the artificial exuberance of a cauliflower or a cabbage, they would attain to a tithe of the meaning of the Colonel's intelligent *protégé*. Look into either House of Parliament, and turn into Cross's Menagerie; listen to the noise and chatter

about nothing of men and birds, and then decide whether language was given exclusively to man to conceal his thoughts, or whether parrots are the only animals who especially employ the gift of speech to show up their incapacity.

The other morning, as I was pottering about, pecking the housemaid's heels, and preventing the porter from reading his Morning Post in peace and quiet, that grave and reverend personage very unceremoniously drove me into the back hall, and shut the door upon me; so I hopped up stairs to my lady's dressing-room, and hammered with my bill, till I gained admittance. Since my dear mistress has found her eyes less useful and less dangerous, than when they softened the iron visage of a certain great lexicographer, she generally employs her page to read to her in the early part of the day; and when I had, on this occasion, taken my place on the back of the chair, and commenced one of my noisy accompaniments to the boy's prelections, she bid me be quiet; for "Poll," said she, "we are reading about you." The page continued to read aloud from the works of a naturalist, who has described us tropicals in a style as brilliant as our own plumage. His notions, however, of our moral qualities and native customs are perfectly absurd. He denied us all talent, and attributed our pertinent answers, as usual, to chance. I could not help uttering one of my sharp loud laughs; which was at once placed to the account of coincidence; though it was as sincere and sardonic, as ever a

follower of M'Culloch bestowed upon the economical declamations of Mr. Sadler. "So, Poll," said her ladyship, "that laugh is as much as to say you don't believe a word of it" "Don't believe a word of it," I repeated; and the tittering page was sent to the housekeeper's room for a plate of *maringues* to reward the apropos. At that moment the door opened, and the groom of the chambers announced Lady ——, one who enjoyed the privilege of an early admittance to my lady's dressing-room.

This lady and myself had made our debut in high life together many years back at the same assembly, and nearly with the same success, which placed us at first in the ranks of rivalry. But time, which softens all antipathies, and the similitude of our fates (for we had both somewhat survived our fashion) had finally reconciled us, and we were now on terms of great familiarity and friendship. In my classifications of human varieties, I had long assigned her a place with the Parus Cœruleus, or blue titmouse. She resembled, in many points, that diminutive but lively bird. The titmouse is remarkable for a superabundance of vitality, and a reckless courage disproportionate to its size and powers, which impels it to assault birds of far superior bulk and strength. It has also the faculty of picking holes in dense sculls, and of sucking out the brains, where there are any. It wages a sportive, but mischievous war with owls and buzzards; and has a decided antipathy to caterpillars, which it hunts out of buds, blossoms, and the ears of corn;

gaining only for its useful services the persecution of that human vulture—man, who cannot distinguish between the destruction of the reptile, and a real injury to the fruit. I am always glad to see my little Lady Titmouse drop in, in B—— Street, for her vivacity excites me; and we chat and flutter about so like each other, that it is quite wonderful.

"*Bon jour, grande princesse,*" she said on entering; "I am glad to see your ladyship in such spirits," for my mistress was still laughing at my last impromptu, which she forthwith repeated to explain her hilarity. "So then, Poll, you are in favour once more," was the reply. "Oh! she is most amusing," continued my mistress, "and says and does things so like humanity, it is quite shocking." "What a libel on the poor bird!" said Lady Titmouse.

"You would have thought by her attention to Buffon, and the meaning of her laugh, that the animal understood everything it heard."

"To be sure it did," said Lady Titmouse, hastily; "why should it not? It has ears, eyes, memory, association, everything that goes to make up mind—" "Hush," said the Countess, putting her hand on the speaker's mouth; "don't be profane, child, it is quite *mauvais ton.*" "My Lady —hear me out. I am sure, if the macaw were to write her own story, she would—" "Do you write it for her, then," interrupted the Peeress. "With all my heart," replied Titmouse; "and if the bird will relate all it has seen and heard for the last

twenty years, the memoir would be worth all the autobiographies that have been puffed into public notice by the egotism of authors, or the speculation of intriguing booksellers."

At this observation my every feather stood an end; I shuddered and screamed. I had heard many foolish and many conceited persons say on my lady's blue and grey parties, (for she had parties of every colour), that they hoped Lady Titmouse would not "put them in her book;" and though I did not exactly know what this meant, yet as it seemed (on their own evidence) to be a punishment reserved for the silly and the vain, I expressed my aversion to the process so clearly, that the little blue cap exclaimed, "But you see the macaw declares off; yet we understand each other so well, and we have lived so much in the same set, that I should like to write her life under her own dictation." My lady seemed much amused by the fancy; and they both said so many odd and amusing things on the subject, and ran over so many names and anecdotes with which I was acquainted, that the idea of writing my own life grew upon me amazingly.

Authorship is the most fashionable *passe par tout* to notoriety; and, to say the truth, I had long been jealous of certain honourable and right honourable personages, whose conversational powers were far below my own; but who, by putting the shreds and patches, which their parroty memory supplies, into black and white, had rather cut me

out with the dispensers of ton. So watching my opportunity to ensure co-operation and secrecy from my co-biographer, I opened my proposition. We were soon agreed; and perched together one summer's morning, when the weather was wet and the town empty, we proceeded to business. I narrated in my own way, and she translated and prepared for press in her's. For the style, therefore, I beg not to be answerable; but for the events and their circumstances I stand or fall by their truth, and, by the honour of a macaw, I have neither suppressed nor altered a tittle of it.

I am a native of one of the most splendid regions of the earth, where Nature dispenses all her bounties with a liberal hand; and where man and bird are released from half the penalties to which, in other climes, their flesh is heir. I was born in one of those superb forests of fruit and flowers, so peculiar to the Brazils, which stood at no great distance from an Indian village, and was not far removed from an European settlement. This forest was impervious to human footsteps. A nation of apes occupied the interior, and the dynasty of the Psittacus Severus, or Brazilian queen macaw, inhabited the upper regions. Several subject states of green and yellow parrots constituted our colonial neighbours. My family held the highest rank in the privileged classes of our oligarchy; for our pride would not admit of a king, and our selfishness (so I must call it) would allow of no rights. We talked nevertheless in our legislative assemblies of

our happy constitution, which by tacit agreement we understood to mean "happy for ourselves;" but the green and yellow parrots too plainly showed a strong disposition to put another interpretation on the phraseology. My paternal nest was situated in the hollow of one of the most ancient and lofty trees in the forest. It had once been rich in fruit and flowers, gums and odours, and all in the same season; and though it was now scathed at the top, hollow in the trunk, and was threatened with total ruin from the first hurricane, we still preferred it, because it *was* the oldest. I owed all my early impressions, and much of my acquired superiority, to my great grandfather, who lived to an extreme old age, and attained a celebrity, of which we were ourselves at that time unaware. He was the identical bird which was brought from Marignan to Prince Maurice, Governor of the Brazils, and whose pertinent answers to many silly questions are recorded in the pages of the greatest of English philosophers.

My great-grandfather was soon disgusted with the folly and cruelty of what is called civilized life; and having seen an Indian roasted alive for a false religion's sake, he thought that some day they might take it into their heads to do as much by a macaw, for the same reason: so he availed himself of an early opportunity of retiring without leave from the service, and returned to his native forest, where his genius and learning at once raised him to the highest honours of the Psittacan aristocracy. Influenced by his example, I early felt the desire

of visiting foreign countries. My mother too (who though fond and indulgent, like all the mothers of our race, was as vain and foolish as any that I have since met with in human society), worked powerfully on my ambition, by her constant endeavours to "push me up the tree," as she called it, in her way. I was already a first-rate orator, and a member of the great congress of macaws, while in our social re-unions I left all the young birds of fashion far behind me; and as I not only articulated some human sounds, picked up from the Indians, but could speak a few words of Portuguese and Dutch, learned by rote from my great-grand father, I was considered a genius of high order.

With the conceit, therefore, of all my noble family, I was prompted to go forth and visit other and better worlds, and to seek a sphere better adapted to the display of my presumed abilities, than that afforded by our domestic senate and homespun society. On one of those celestial nights, known only in the tropical regions, I set forth on my travels, directing my course to the Portuguese settlement, which the youthful vigour of my wing enabled me to reach by the break of morning.

Having refreshed myself with a breakfast of fruit, after the exhaustion of my nocturnal flight, I ascended a spacious palm-tree, which afforded an admirable view of the adjacent country, and a desirable shelter from the ardours of the rising sun. My first impulse was to take a bird's-eye view of the novel scene which lay before me, and I gazed

around for some minutes with intense delight; but fatigue gradually obtained the mastery over curiosity, and, putting my head unconsciously beneath my wing, I fell into a profound sleep.

How long this continued I know not; but I was suddenly awakened by a strange muttering of unknown voices. I looked, and beheld two creatures, whose appearance greatly surprised me. They had nothing of the noble form and aspect of our Indian neighbours. One of them considerably resembled the preacher-monkey in countenance and deportment: his head was denuded of hair, and his person was covered by a black substance, which left no limb visible except his ancles and feet, which were very much like those of an ape. The other had all the air of a gigantic parrot—he had a hooked bill, a sharp look, a yellow head: and all the rest of his strange figure was party-coloured—blue, green, red, and black. I classed him at once as a specimen of the Psittacus Ochropterus.

The ape and the parrot seemed, like myself, to have taken shelter beneath the palm-tree, for the purposes of shade and repose. They had beside them a basket filled with dead game, fruit, and honey; and the parrot had a long instrument near him on the ground, which I afterwards learned was a fowling-piece. They talked a strange jargon of different intonation, like that of the respective chatter of the green and the grey parrots. Both seemed to complain, and, by the expression of their ugly and roguish faces, to interrogate each other.

As soon as they went away, I endeavoured to mutter to myself the sounds they had uttered, but could retain only two phrases. The one had been spoken by the ape, and ran thus: "Shure it was for my sweet sowl's sake, jewel;" the other was, "Eh, sirs, it was aw' for the love of the siller." I was extremely amused by my acquisition; and, being convinced that I was now qualified to present myself at the settlement, was about to descend from my altitude, when the two strangers returned. They had come back for the gun, which they had left behind them. As they picked it up it went off, and I was startled into one of my loudest screams.

The strangers looked at me with great delight, he whom I likened to the parrot exclaiming, "Weel, mon, what brought you here?" I answered in his own words, for want of better, "Eh, sirs, it was aw' for the love of the siller." He dropped his piece, and fled in consternation, calling lustily, "It's auld clooty himsen, mon—it's auld Horny, I tell ye; come awa, come awa."

His friend, who seemed more acquainted with our species, encouraged him to return, and offering me some fruit from his basket, said, "Why, Poll, you cratur, what brought you so far from home?" I endeavoured to imitate his peculiar tone, and replied, "Why thin it was for my sweet sowl's sake, jewel." "Why then," said my interlocutor coolly (for I never forgot his words), "that bird bates cock-fighting." They now both endeavoured to catch me: it was all I wanted, and I perched on the

preaching-monkey's wrist, whilst he took up the basket in his left hand, and in this easy and commodious style of travelling, we proceeded.

On approaching the settlement, a fierce dispute arose between the friends, of which, by each tearing me from the other, I was evidently the object; and I am quite sure that I should have been torn to pieces between them, but for the timely approach of a person, who issued from a lofty and handsome edifice on the road side, attended by a train of preacher-monkeys, of which he was the chief. He was quite a superior-looking being to either of my first acquaintance, who cowered and shrunk beneath his eagle look. They seemed humbly to lay their case before him; when, after looking contemptuously on both, he took me to himself, caressed me, and giving me to an attendant, said, "This bird belongs to neither—it is the property of mother church:" and the property of mother church I remained for some years.

Of my two friends of the palm-tree, one, the preacher-monkey, turned out to be a poor Irish lay brother of the convent of which my new master (an Irishman too) was the superior; my yellow parrot was a Scotch adventurer, who came out to give lectures on *poleetical economy* to the Brazilians; and who, finding that they had no taste for moral science, had become a servant of all-work to the brotherhood. My dwelling was a missionary house of the Propaganda, established for the purpose of converting (*i. e.* burning) the poor Indians.

The Superior, Father Flynn, had recently arrived from Lisbon with unlimited powers. He was clever, eloquent, witty, and humorous; but, panting for a bishopric in his native country, he was principally employed in theological writings, which might bring him into notice, and hasten his recall to Europe.

Next to the servants' hall of a great English family, the first place in the world for completing the education of a macaw of genius, is a convent. Its idleness and ennui render a monkey or a parrot a valuable resource: and between what I picked up, and what I was taught by the monks of the Propaganda, my acquirements soon became stupendous. Always following my kind master from the refectory to the church, assisting at mess or at mass, being near him in the seclusion of the oratory, and in the festivities he frequently held with his more confidential friends, I had loaded my astonishing memory with scraps of theology and fun. I could sing a French drinking-song, taught me by the sub-prior, Frère Jacques, and intonate a "Gloria in Excelsis," with a true nasal twang. I had actually learned the Creed in English;* and could call all the brothers by their names. I had even learned the Savoyard's dance from my friend Frère Jacques; and sung "Gai Coco" at the same time, like Scaliger's parrot; from whose history Frère

* "Rhodoginus mentions a parrot which could recite correctly the whole of the Apostles' Creed."—*Animal Biography, by the Rev. W. Bingley.*

Jacques took the idea of teaching me. I did this, it must be acknowledged, with great awkwardness, turning in my toes, and often tumbling backwards, in a clumsy and ludicrous way. But this amused my religious friends more than all the rest; for, like the great, they loved a ridicule quite as well as a talent; and, provided they were amused, were not nice as to the means. My fame soon began to spread on all sides; and the anecdotes told of the macaw of the Propaganda soon reached the circles of the Governor of the Brazils, who wrote to request the pleasure of my company for a few weeks at the palace. This was a compliment which he had never paid to the learned superior of the order; and my master was evidently hurt. He declined, therefore, the invitation for me, on the plea that he would soon visit Rio Janeiro himself, when I should accompany him into the Vice-regal presence.

This visit shortly took place, not for the object supposed by the community (who parted with me, even for a short time, with great regret,) but for another purpose. The British Ambassador, Lord ——, who had recently arrived at Rio, was a countryman of Father Flynn's. He enjoyed eminent literary celebrity, was a delightful poet, and well acquainted with the Portuguese language. The superior had no doubt that his own literary and theological merits were equally known to his Excellency, whom he visited with a view to negociating a passage in the British man-of-war; for he had been called on a secret mission to Ireland, and wished to depart without notifying his inten-

tion to the subalterns of the Propaganda. I was not included in the muster-roll of this expedition; but, anxious to lose no opportunity of seeing the world, and desirous of beholding the Governor, who had shown his taste and politeness, by inviting me to his court, I contrived to nestle myself in the carriage, without the superior's knowledge, and followed his steps to the very ante-room of the embassy.

It was too late to send me back; for I was instantly seized by a company of pretty young animals, the very reverse in appearance of the preacher-monkeys of the Propaganda; they all seemed to find in me a kindred soul: my master was ushered into the cabinet, and I was left with my new acquaintance, who were called "*attachés*," whom I at once classed with the *secretary-birds*;* while here and there, I thought, was mingled among them a specimen of the booby or Pelicanus Sula. Two of these mischievous creatures seemed to delight in tormenting me, from mere idleness and ennui, which I bore for some time with great patience, as I saw the boobies pay them much respect. One was called Lord Charles, and the other the Hon. Mr. Henry. I learned these names with facility, and contrived to repeat them, as they had been taught me, by the frequent iteration of one of the boobies.

* "The Dutch," says Le Vaillant, "give this bird the name of Secretary, on account of the bunch of quills behind its head."—*Bingley, Animal Biography.*

Meantime, Father Flynn, with a Jesuit's adroitness, was endeavouring to gain his object, as I afterwards learned; but, on alluding to his works and celebrity, he discovered that the ambassador had never so much as heard of him; though he had heard wonders of his parrot, which he requested might be sent for. I was immediately ushered into the cabinet as the superior went out, and I never saw my dear master more. Perhaps he could "bear no rival near the throne;" perhaps, in his pre-occupation, he forgot to reclaim me. Be that as it may, he sailed that night, in a Portuguese merchantman, for Lisbon; and I became the property of the representative of his British Majesty.

After the first few days of favouritism, I sensibly lost ground with his Excellency; for he was too deeply occupied, and had too many resources of his own, to find his amusement in my society. During the few days I sat at his table, I entertained his diplomatic guests with cracking nuts, extracting the kernels, peeling oranges, talking broad Scotch and Parisian French, chanting the "Gloria," dancing "Gai Coco," and, in fact, exhibiting all my accomplishments. I was, however, soon sent to the secretary's office to be taught a new jargon, and to be subjected to new tricks, from the underlings of the embassy.

Here I picked up but little; for there was but little to pick up. I learned, however, to call for "Red tape and sealing-wax"—to cry "What a bore!" "Did you ever see such a quiz!"—to call "Lord Charles," "Mr. Henry," and pronounce

"good for nothing;" a remark applied by the young men to the pens, which they flung away by hundreds, and which the servants picked up and sold, with the other perquisites of office, incidental to their calling. Whenever I applied these acquisitions with effect, it was always attributed to chance; but I was so tormented and persecuted by Lord Charles and Mr. Henry, who, being unpaid *attachés*, had nothing to do, and helped each other to do it, that I took every opportunity to annoy them. One day, when the ante-room was filled with young officers of the British frigate, one of the boobies, pointing to Lord Charles, called to me, "Poll, who is that?" I answered, "Red tape and sealing-wax;" and raised a general shout at the expense of the little diplomatic pedant. An Irish midshipman present, a Mr. O'Gallagher, pointing to Mr. Henry, asked me, "Who is that, Poll?" "Good for nothing" I replied; and Mr. Henry flew at me in a rage, swore I had been taught to insult him, and that he would wring my neck off. This he would have done, but for the protection of the chaplain, to whose breast I flew, and who carried me away to his own room.

In a few days I was consigned to Mr. O'Gallagher, the midshipman, as a present to the chaplain's patroness, a lady of high rank and celebrated sanctity in Ireland, near to whose Propaganda the family of O'Gallagher resided. I was the bearer of a letter of introduction, in which my pious education and saintly acquirements were set forth, my

knowledge of the Creed exposed, and myself recommended as a means of aiding her ladyship's proselyting vocation, as animals of less intelligence had done before. I embarked, therefore, on board the British frigate—an honour which had been refused my old master, and was treated with great care and attention during the voyage. On arriving in a British port, my young protector got leave of absence, and took a passage in a vessel bound for Dublin.

On the morning of our coming to anchor, my cage was put on shore on the quay, while O'Ghallagher returned to look after his luggage. Thus left to myself, I soon attracted the attention of a wretched, squalid-looking animal, something between a scarecrow and a long-armed gibbon. His melancholy visage dilated into a broad grin the moment he saw me; and, coming up and making me a bow, he said, "Ah! thin, Poll, agrah, you're welcome to ould Ireland. Would you take a taste of potato, just to cure your say-sickness?" and he put a cold potato into my cage, which he had been gnawing with avidity himself. The potato was among the first articles of my food in my native paradise, and the recollection of it awakened associations which softened me towards the poor, hospitable creature who presented it. Still I hesitated, till he said, "Take it, miss, and a thousand welcomes; take it, agrah, from poor Pat." I took it with infinite delight, and, holding it in my claws, and peeling it with my beak, began to mutter,

"Poor Pat! poor Pat!" "Oh musha, musha! oh, by the powers!" he cried, "but that's a great bird, any how — just like a Christian — look here, boys." A crowd now gathered round my cage, and several exclamations, which recalled my old friends of the Propaganda, caught my attention. "Oh! queen of glory!" cried one; "Holy Moses!" exclaimed another; "Blessed rosary!" said a third. I turned my head from side to side, listening; and excited by the excitement I caused, I recited several scraps of litanies in good Latinity. There was first an universal silence, then an universal shout, and a general cry of "A miracle! a miracle!" "Go to Father Murphy," said one; "Off with ye, ye sowl, to the Counsellor," said a second; "Bring the baccah to him," cried an old woman; "Mrs. Carey, where is your blind son?" said a young one. Could faith have sufficed, I should indeed have worked miracles.

In the midst of my triumphs, Mr. O'Gallagher returned, and carried me off, put me in a carriage, and drove away, followed by the shouting multitude. That night we put up at an hotel in Sackville Street, and the next morning the street re-echoed with cries of "Here is a full account of the miraculous parrot just arrived in the city of Dublin, with a list of his wonderful cures, for the small charge of one halfpenny."

Shortly after we set off by the Ballydangan heavy fly, for Sourcraut Hall. I was placed on the top of the coach, to the delight of the outside pas-

sengers; where I soon made an acquaintance with the customary oratory of guards and coachmen, which produced much laughter. I rapidly added to my vocabulary many curious phrases, among which the most distinct were, "Aisy now, aisy;" "Get along out of that;" "All's right," &c. &c. &c.; with nearly a verse of "The night before Larry was stretched," tune and all; and the air of "Polly, put the kettle on," which the guard was practising on his bugle, to relieve the tedium of the journey.

Like all nervous animals, I am extremely susceptible to external impressions; and the fresh air, movement, and company, had all their usual exhilarating effects on my spirits. Our lady of Sourcraut Hall, Lady C——, received myself and my protector with a ceremonious and freezing politeness; asked a few questions concerning my treatment, gentleness, and docility; and, desiring my kind companion to put me on the back of a chair, she bowed him out of the room. When he was gone, the lady turned to a gloomy-looking man, who sat reading at a table, and who looked so like one of the Portuguese brothers of the Propaganda, that I took him for a *frate*—"What a poor benighted creature that young man seems to be!" she said. The grave gentleman, who I afterwards found was known in the neighbourhood by the title of her ladyship's "moral agent," replied, "What, madam, would you have of an O'Gallagher—a family of the blackest Papists in the county?" My

lady shook her head, and threw up her devout eyes. —Dinner was now announced, and the moral agent giving his hand to the lady, I was left to sleep away the fatigue of my journey.

I awoke very hungry, and consequently disposed to be very talkative, but was silenced by finding myself surrounded by a crowd of persons of both sexes who were eagerly gazing on me. A certain prostrate look of sly, shy humility, lengthened their pale faces, to the exclusion of all intellectual expression. They formed a sort of religious meeting, called a tea-and-tract party; but the open door discovered preparations for a more substantial conclusion to the *obligato* prayers and lecture of the evening. My new mistress was evidently descanting on my merits, and read that paragraph from the chaplain's letter which described my early associations, my knowledge of the Creed, and announced me as a source of edification to her servants.

Two or three words of this harangue operating on my memory, I put forth my profession of faith with a clearness of articulation and fidelity really wonderful for a bird. What exclamations! what turning-up of eyes! I was stifled with caresses, intoxicated with praises, and crammed with sweetmeats. The moral agent grew pale with jealousy, when Doctor Direful was announced. He rushed into the room like a whirlwind, but stood aghast at beholding the devout crowd that encircled me. Instead of the usual apophthegms and serious discourse, he heard nothing but "Pretty Poll,"

"Scratch a poll," "What a dear bird," &c. The malicious moral agent chuckled, and explained that the bird had, for the moment, usurped the attention which should exclusively belong to his reverence, who had taken the pains to come so far to enlighten the dark inmates of Sourcraut Hall. Dr. Direful stood rolling his fierce eye (he had but one) on the abashed assembly; and, pushing me off my perch, drove me with his handkerchief into the dense crowd which filled the bottom of the room, and consisted of all the servants of the house, with some recently converted Papists from among the Sourcraut tenantry. All drew back in horror, to let one so anathematised pass without contact. I coiled myself up near a droll-looking little postillion, who, while turning up the whites of his eyes, was coaxing me to him with a fragment of plum-cake, which he had stolen from the banquet-table.

Dr. Direful returned to the centre of the room, and mounted a desk to commence his lecture. The auditory crowded and cowered timidly round him, while he, looking down on them with a wrathful and contemptuous glance, was about to pour forth the pious venom which hung upon his lips, when a sharp cry of "*Get along out of that,*" struck him dumb. Inquiry was useless, for all were ready to swear they had not uttered a word. Dr. Direful called them "blasphemous liars," and proceeded one and all to empty the vials of his wrath through the words of a text of awful denunciation, which I dare not here repeat; but his words were again

arrested by the exclamation of " Aisy now, aisy—what a devil of a hurry you are in!" uttered in quick succession. He jumped down from his altitude; and, in reply to his renewed inquiries, a serious coachman offered up to the vengeance of this Moloch of methodism the mischievous postillion, who had that morning detected the not always sober son of the whip in other devotions than those to which he professed exclusive addiction. When I saw the rage of all parties, I thought of the roasted Indians of the Brazils, and shuddered for the poor lad.

After a short but inquisitorial examination, in which he in vain endeavoured to throw the blame on me, he was stripped of his gaudy dress, and, in spite of his well-founded protestations of innocence, turned almost naked from the house. When peace was restored, a hymn was sung as an exorcism of the evil spirit that had gotten among the assembly; when, being determined to exculpate the poor postillion, I joined with all my force in the chorus, with my Catholic " *Gloria in excelsis*," which I abruptly changed into " Polly, put the kettle on."

Thus taken in the fact, I was, without ceremony, denounced as an emissary from Clongowes, brought to Sourcraut Hall by the Papist O'Gallagher, with a forged letter, to disturb the community. I was immediately cross-examined by a religious attorney, as if I had been a white-boy, or a ribbon-man. " Come forward," he said, " you bird of Satan!—speak out, and answer for yourself, for it's yourself

can do it, you egg of the devil! What brought you here?" I answered, "It was all for my sweet sowl's sake, jewel;"—and the answer decided my fate, without more to do. And now, loaded with all the reproaches that the *odium theologicum* could suggest, I was cuffed, hunted, and finally driven out of the gates by the serious coachman, and left to perish on the highway.

On recovering from my fright, I found myself at the edge of a dry ditch, where the poor shivering postillion sat lamenting his martyrdom. I went up to him, cowering and chattering; and, at the sight of me, the tears dried on his dirty cheeks, his sobs changed to a laugh of delight; and when I hopped on his wrist, and cried "Poor Pat," all his sufferings were forgotten.

While thus occupied, a little carriage drawn by a superb horse, with the reins thrown loose on his beautiful neck, ascended the hill; at the sight I screamed out, "Get along out of that!" which so frightened the high-blooded creature that he started, and flung the two persons in the carriage fairly into the middle of the road. One of them, in a military dress, sprung at once on his feet, and laying the whip across the naked shoulders of the postillion, exclaimed, "I'll teach you, you little villain, to break people's necks." "Oh! murthur! murthur!" cried the poor boy, "shure, it was not me, plase your honour; only the parrot, Captain." "What parrot, you lying rascal?" "There, Captain, sir, look forenenst you." The Captain did look up,

and saw me perched on the branch of a scrubby hawthorn tree. Surprised and amused, he exclaimed, "By Jove! how odd!—What a magnificent bird!—Why, Poll, what the deuce brought you here?" "Eh, sirs," I replied at random, "it was aw' for the love of the siller." The Captain, and his little groom Midge, who had picked himself up on the other side of the cabriolet, shrieked with laughing. "I say, my boy," said the Captain, "is that macaw your's?" "It is," said the little liar. "Would you take a guinea for it?" asked the Captain. "Troth, would I; two," said the postillion. "Done," said the Captain; and pulling out his purse, and giving the two guineas, I suffered myself to be caught and placed in the cabriolet: the young officer sprang in after me, and, taking the reins, pursued his journey.

We slept that night at a miserable inn in a miserable town: the next morning we arrived at my old hotel in Sackville Street, and shortly after sailed for England.

The Honourable George Fitz-Forward, my new master, was a younger brother of small means and large pretensions. He had been quartered at Kilmac-squabble with a detachment, where he had passed the winter in still-hunting, quelling *ructions*, shooting grouse and rebels, spitting over the bridge, and smoking cigars; and having obtained leave of absence, *pour se décrasser*, was on his way to London for the ensuing season. We travelled in the cab by easy stages, and halted only at great

houses on the road, beginning with Plas Newyd, and ending at Sion House.

My master's rank, and my talents, were as good as board-wages to us; and as the summer was not yet sufficiently advanced for the London winter, we found every body at home, and had an amazingly pleasant time. My master was enchanted with his acquisition. I made the *frais* of every society, and my repartees and bon-mots furnished the Lord Johns and Lady Louisas with subjects for whole reams of pink and blue note-paper. My master frequently said, "That bird is wonderful! he is a great catch!" and my fame had spread over the whole west end of the town a full week before our arrival in London.

The Honourable George Fitz-Forward and myself arrived, on a fine May evening, in a gloomy little street in the heart of London, and took possession of a very humble lodging. The want of comfort, cleanliness, and fresh air, was the more remarkable, from its contrast with the sumptuous rural palaces which we had lately visited. This was my master's habitual abode when in town; here he slept, but he might be said to *live* in his cab; and he left his address at the club. My delicate organs took offence at all that surrounded me, and, above all, at a fat, dirty Irish maid, whose odour and aspect were alike my antipathy. The first night, as she lighted us up to our room, I cried out contemptuously, "Get along out of that!" She turned on me with a look of astonishment and vindictiveness,

which I shall never forget, exclaiming, "Get along out of that yourself, you dirty spalpeen! it is you, and the likes of you, that takes the bread out of honest people's mouths, you furreign baste, you!" To all this tirade I slowly rolled out from my closed beak a reiteration of the offensive "Get along out of that!" She turned in concentrated rage to Midge, who stood laughing till his sides shook, and said, "Troth, I'll lave my mark on your poll-parrot before he quits the place. Now, mind my words, Mr. Midge." Mr. Midge did mind them, and he was so persuaded of the sincerity of the threat, that he always locked me up on going out; and as this was every day, and for the whole day, I became a state prisoner for the indiscretion of a single phrase, as many a too-demonstrative genius has done before me.

Silent, desolate, and neglected, left for days without food, except what I picked up at Midge's breakfast, for my master always breakfasted at his club, my natural cheerfulness faded into sullen gloom, and all the miserable consequences of my foolish and ill-directed ambition came upon me, with vain regret and deep remorse. When I recalled the brilliant region I had abandoned, the magnificent forest-home I had left, the proud position I held among my own species, the joyous sensations that then thrilled through my whole being, resulting from the happy and natural state of things in which I was placed—and when I compared all this with the gloom, solitude, close atmo-

sphere, and privation of light and liberty of my present condition, I was overwhelmed with misery and despair. This was, perhaps, the most painful period of my chequered existence; and it was forcibly recalled to my recollection the other day, while hearing my lady's page read aloud the discovery of my native hemisphere, and the kidnapping of the noble and happy savages by that great man, who brought them in chains to Spain, because (says the author) he saw in them that which would make them "worthy members of the church, and loyal subjects of the king."

I was struck with the parallel between their fate and my own. The mild and benevolent chiefs of the Bahamas must have felt, on their arrival at Madrid, something as I felt on my arrival at London; but their misfortunes arose from their virtues. Never would they have been chained, and tortured, and occasionally roasted, had they not possessed those talents and qualities, which rendered them worthy of the notice of church and state. I indeed had no such utilities—I was neither loyal nor devout by nature. My little gleam of reason had only served to lead me astray; and every acquirement I had made, every word I uttered, to my last attack upon Irish Molly, had been the source of my ill-luck, and the cause of my suffering. Had I not been more intelligent than my species, more prone to fun, and inclined to laugh at the follies of others, than to correct my own, I might have been the happiest of macaws.

Owls, boobies, and buzzards—how I envied you your organic deficiencies! To add to the misery of the epoch to which I now allude, the moulting season came on: I pined and sickened, my crest fell, my feathers dropped, my sufferings were acute, beyond what the egotism of man, who thinks that none suffer but himself, could imagine. I was soon reduced to a skeleton, and looked like a scarecrow. All my intelligence fell into abeyance, my mind was gone, my speech was inarticulate, and my memory failed me. The only phrase I could remember, was one taught me by my great-grandfather in my infancy, "Povero papagay;" and this I repeated in every tone of complaint and self-commiseration.

My master came home so late at night, that he scarcely observed me; and Midge, when he at last perceived the change in my appearance, accused Irish Molly of poisoning me; but I proved the falseness of the charge by my convalescence. Youth and strength triumphed, and I was beginning to recover my spirits and speech, when, one evening, my master returned home earlier than usual, and so changed in appearance, as to strike even me; I thought that he too was moulting. Midge had not yet come in, and Irish Molly had lighted the Honourable George to his room with a dirty tallow candle, which she placed on the table before him. He sat pale and shivering, and endeavouring to stir up the dead embers on the hearth, but they

were extinct. Here was another aristocratic scion no better off than myself.

It is allowed even by the enemies of our race, the heaven-born haters of macaws and parrots, that we are extremely susceptible of kindness and unkindness, that we love and hate intensely, and that we are capable of the most devoted attachment to our masters, as long as they show us any signs of friendship; but that, when deprived of their attention and caresses, we become sensible of their neglect, irritable, ill-humoured, and vindictive, if provoked by their capricious notice, or idle tricks. This was my present position with my master. As he could not bring me to his club, and was always afraid of having his shabby home discovered, he had no longer the same occasion for my amusing qualities; and, having once bitten his finger in jealous irritability, when he began to teaze me, after a week's neglect, I fell into utter disgrace; or rather, no longer wanted, I was no longer remembered.

His suffering appearance, and desolate situation, however, as he sat sighing and moaning, and putting his hand to his forehead, awoke all my former sympathies. I descended from my perch, gradually approached him, and cowering and creeping round him, endeavoured to offer consolation through every pathetic tone and phrase I knew, uttering alternately, "Povero Papagay," "Poor Poll," "Poor Pat." My master smiled, patted my head, and said with bitterness, "Add poor younger brother, Poll." "Poor

younger brother," I replied, fluttering my wings, and perching on his arm. My master laid me gently on the table, and, covering his face with his hands, wept bitterly.

The entrance of Midge roused him—he hurried into the slovenly little bed-chamber at the back of his drawing-room, shut the door, and appeared no more that night. The next day all was bustle in the little drawing-room. My master kept his bed; I heard his moans; Midge, the landlady, and Irish Molly, held a conference; and shortly afterwards arrived an animal, which, to my fancy, had a close affinity with the jackdaw. He was all black and white, with an erect head, and a jerking gait, a pert solemnity of look, and a crafty dulness of aspect, which perfectly impersonated that ill-omened bird, which had always been my favourite aversion. I was shocked at the appearance of this creature. I remembered that the occurrence of a jackdaw was considered at the Propaganda as the sign of approaching death, and that three of them portended a funeral.

I trembled for my poor master, and took my station near the head of his bed, from which neither threats nor caresses could detach me. I soon gathered that he was not moulting, but sick of some disorder caught in the bogs of Ireland. I endeavoured to make myself as amusing and consolatory as possible. I repeated all his complainings; I chattered at the jackdaw, and frequently anticipated his wonted questions, to his great an-

noyance.* I was particularly pleased with a phrase which my master, in his impatience, had more than once applied to him, when ordered to swallow some horrible black stuff: "I'll not touch a drop of it—he is an old quack, and a regular humbug." I repeated after him, "He is an old quack, and a regular humbug." "So he is, Poll," said my master, laughing for the first time since his illness, from which he was now recovering, in spite of the jackdaw and the black draughts.

When able to leave his bed, he carried me on his arm into the little drawing-room, placed me on the back of his chair, and I had the distinction of sharing his first chicken, and pecking at his grapes. My attention during his illness had quite replaced me in his affections, or at least among his resources. A few days afterwards, Midge was sent with a note to the Horse-Guards, and immediately after his return, he was followed by one of the prettiest young human animals I had ever seen. He was announced by the name of Mr. Alfred Mount Martre. His appearance quite dazzled me! At first I took him for a noble specimen of the scarlet flamingo—the same erect bearing, the same brilliant colours, the same gentle look in the eyes, yet warlike aspect. Of all the ornithological world, I

* Willoughby tells us of a parrot which had grown old with its master, and shared with him the infirmities of age. Being accustomed to hear nothing but the words "I am sick," when a person asked it "How do you do, Poll?" it replied in a doleful tone, and stretching itself along, "I am sick."—*Animal Biography.*

was best acquainted, after my own tribe, with the flamingo, with which we macaws thought we had something in common. The flamingo is in its nature gentle and brave, and full of confidence and trust in the whole living creation, till civilised man teaches it better, and forces it to become ferocious and wary in its own defence. From the moment these birds become acquainted with that great enemy of creation, whose vocation is to enslave or to destroy, the flamingoes keep together in troops, place a sentinel to watch the approach of the foe, and send forth a note of danger, which is their natural war-trumpet. Social and gay when at peace, they are only pugnacious when aroused by danger or insult. When young they are easily caught, and carried away, upon slight temptation; but they catch in their turn when more experienced, and many of the prettiest little birds of the tropics become their victims.

My heart warmed to this human flamingo, who stood armed *cap-à-pied* before my master. He said he was on guard at the palace, and had but a quarter of an hour to stay. In that quarter of an hour my master poured forth his confidence to him, and gave a brief history of his adventures, from his joining the regiment at Kil-mac-squabble, till his arrival in town. They had been schoolfellows at Harrow, whence both of them had proceeded to finish their education in that "house of refuge for the destitute"—the army; the one in a regiment of the line, the other in the Life-Guards. Each

had a hundred and fifty pounds a-year for his *ménus plaisirs*, and an occasional ten guineas from grandmammas for clean gloves—a luxury not always within the reach of younger brothers. These were their own words, in the course of their mutual autobiographic confessions; and having once dropped in that great preserve—my memory—they were never forgotten. "Your grade as a Life-guardsman places you beyond the reach of social degradation," continued my master; "and your sister, Lady Augusta, takes care of you with the exclusives. But, since my late arrival in London, I have never got further than a Dowager dinner in Portman Square, or a second-rate rout, made up of the sweepings of the porter's book. For it is one thing to be let in to the dull circles of country houses, on the strength of family connexions, and another to have the *entré* in that very refined society, from which ambitious fashion will even exclude a father that is a bore, or a mother that dresses ill. In short," he said, almost choking with emotion, "my position in London is too painful; and, unless I can do something to extricate myself from obscurity, I shall not stay out my leave of absence, but return at once to still-hunting and the typhus in Ireland, as a matter of preference."

"But cawnt you do something to announce yourself?" drawled out the flamingo—"cawnt you write a book, or something?"

"Write a book!—I can scarcely read one—besides, what could I write about?"

"Oh! I rather fancy that don't much signify. Lord Frederick says his publisher will bring out any thing by an Honourable :—he does not in the least care what trash it is; it puffs and sells all the same."

"Still one must have that trash; and, since I left Harrow, I have seen nothing in Ireland but bogs and beggars."

"Well, but arn't that vastly funny? The Irish, you know, are so droll and merry?"

"Droll and merry!—poor wretches—about as merry as the nightmare. Where I am quartered they are wandering about like spectres, and living upon roots and nettles, which they find in the ditches."

"Indeed! How very tiresome!"

"Poor Pat! I am quite sorry . . ."

"Poor Pat!" I re-echoed in my deepest tone of pathos, delighted to have an opportunity of making myself known to the flamingo.

"Poor Pat! Why what the devil's that?" said the flamingo, turning about in surprise.

"Oh! that's only the macaw."

"Only the macaw!" said the flamingo, rising and patting my head, which I bent forward to his delicate hand. "What a treasure! What can he do?"

"Do! not a great deal; but he can say every thing; and is much more amusing and intelligent than half the subalterns of our's, I can tell you. My poor macaw," he added, with a deep sigh,

" was my only friend and comforter in my recent illness."

" By Jove !—and with such a bird as this, you want to be ticketed ! Why, Colonel O'Kelly, you know, went upon the reputation of his parrot for twenty years; and Mrs. Doldrum, I heard my mother say, would never have got on, but for her wonderful bullfinch, which went through the sword-exercise with a straw. Even last week all the world were making interest to get into —— house, where the learned pig was exhibited, and threw the Opera into neglect: and Lady ——'s delightful soirées owed every thing to Le Compte's canaries."

My master laughed. " Oh! then, you think I may get into fashion, under the patronage of my macaw? That did very well in the country; but in London, Poll is of as little consequence as myself."

" Why, you know, there are so many Fitzforwards of three generations, that you must have something to distinguish you, if you mean to get on, and the parrot, properly brought out, will do as well as any thing. For instance, if I was to mention you, and was asked which of all the Fitzforwards you are, it would be something to be enabled to say, 'the macaw Fitzforward,' just as one says, 'Poodle Beryl,' 'Parrot O'Kelly,' or 'Jerusalem Whaley.'"

My master was silent for a moment, and then said, smilingly, " But who is to present Polly to this discerning world! How is she to get into fashion herself, in order to introduce her master?"

"Leave that to me: I'll go this moment to my old friend, the Dowager Countess of ——, and puff Poll to the skies, as a lion of the first quality. You will get an invite to her first pink parties; and once booked there, your business is done."

My master laughed, and turned the thing into a joke; but it was evident that the proposition had made a due impression; for, after the young guardsman's departure, he actually put me through all my manœuvres, aired my vocabulary, rehearsed my Savoyard dance, exercised my slang, and added to my fashionable acquirements, by teaching me to go through the manual of smoking a cigar, which I held in my claw with the air of a Pacha. All this amused my poor master amazingly, and procured me caresses and luxuries, to which I had long been a stranger.

The next day he even took me with him in his cab to the Park. As I sat smoking my cigar beside him, every eye followed us; and we soon became the sole objects of attraction. A hundred bright eyes shone on us through their lorgnettes, and the flâmingo riding up to us said, "All the world are inquiring who you are: Lady J—— has just observed to De R—— that, since Lord Byron and his bear, there has been nothing seen so odd and original as that man and his macaw. I have promised to present you to her. The cigar was a great hit. Oh! here comes my Dowager—I have done the needful for you there; and I see she has found you and Poll out already."

A coronetted carriage drove up beside the cab, and a fair and fashionable-looking old lady, putting out her head with a nod and an air of familiar acquaintance, said, "How do you do, Mr. ——. How stupid! I can't recollect your name; but I knew one of your grandmother's well—the great beauty, not the stupid one. Dear, how like her you are—I mean the beauty. Young Mr. What's-your-name, come here — do now, and let your wretched horse alone. Can't you tell me your friend's name?"

"Fitzforward, ma'am," said the flamingo, laughing.

"Ay, to be sure, I know all the Fitzforwards. My dear Mr. Fitzforward, you must come to my parties, and bring your macaw. Don't come to-morrow night; that's my blue party: don't bring the parrot on a blue night. The blues hate parrots; and they will think it an epigram, for a reason they have. Don't come till I send you a card. Never come without your macaw—do you mind. You have your grandmother's pretty eyes —Good bye—Home."

The next morning my master received the promised card. "The Dowager Countess —— at home Wednesday evening.—To the Hon. G. Fitzforward and his macaw." My master read the invitation with a bitter smile, and then, flinging it into the fire, rose, walked about the room in great emotion, and pausing before my perch, said, "So, Donna Papagay, I am to be indebted to you for

my place in fashionable life. Four hundred years of nobility, and an alliance with half the British aristocracy, will not alone suffice to bring a man into notice, and efface the insignificance of younger brotherhood, without wealth, or without celebrity." I fluttered, and cowered, and muttered, "Poor younger brother!" "Poor younger brother, indeed!" said my master, shrugging his shoulders; "you certainly were a great catch, Poll." "A great catch, a great catch," I reiterated. "And I really do believe," he added, "have every requisite to succeed. You can cant, and slang, sing, dance, chatter, and smoke a cigar.—Well, we shall see." He then gave me in charge to Midge, with a precaution unusual to him. He desired him to supply me with a warm bath, and went forth to breakfast with his friend at Knightsbridge Barracks.

When the evening of our *debût* arrived, my master could not bring himself to accompany me to Lady ——'s rout. He was well aware that he would not be welcome without me, and he had too much pride, if not too much feeling, to place himself on a level with a bird-fancier from Exeter Change, or to exhibit as a tiger in the train of a fashionable macaw. He resolved, therefore, at once to satisfy his own *amour propre*, and not offend the Countess by disappointing her of her lion, and accordingly to send me alone.

The idea amused him beyond measure, and my toilet was the occupation of the evening. I was

painted under the eyes, and up to the eyes—a relief which gave them the brightness and the ferocity of a hawk's. A cigar-case was hung over my neck with a rose-coloured ribbon; and I was perfumed with *eau de millefleurs*, and fed with quintessential coffee-lozenges (of which I was extremely fond) as an additional exhilaration of my natural spirits and loquacity.

Thus armed for conquest, I was given into the custody of the delighted Midge, with due orders as to my style and title. We stepped into the cab, and in a few minutes found ourselves in the line of carriages leading to the Countess's assembly.

It happened that the carriage immediately preceding us was that of the Portuguese ambassador; our announce, therefore, was made in the same breath. "The Duc d'Albuquerque and Donna Papagay" was echoed from the porter to the footmen in the hall, to the groom of the chambers on the stairs, and to the page and maître d'hôtel at the drawing-room door. I was handed up immediately after his excellency, from the arm of one servant to another, amidst the stifled titter of all. "Who is Donna Papagay?" asked the group nearest the door. "The Portuguese ambassadress," was the general answer; when my appearance immediately behind the representative of majesty caused an unusual ebullition of mirth; and his excellency remaining a *ridicule ineffaçable*, shrunk into a corner, while I was received with raptures by my noble hostess, and borne through the suite of rooms on the page's arm to the conservatory.

I was followed by the whole assembly; and I have often heard my lady since say that, with the exception of the first night of the young Roscius's appearance, such a sensation had never been created by any *debût* in the capital of the most thinking people of the world. It seemed that every thing had been prepared for my reception, with the most appropriate scenic effect. The conservatory, the destined scene of my triumphs, was fitted up to the best of her ladyship's conception as a Brazilian forest. Palm-trees cut in green tin, paper parrots perched on Indian roses, and a rock in the centre, with "an alligator stuffed" basking at its foot, and a tall cacique (stuffed too) leaning sentimentally on the summit — gave, or were intended to give, an imitation of those mighty regions whence it was announced I had recently arrived. In short, it was a gallantry for the macaw. I was placed on a branch of an upas-tree, fresh from Forster's, the artificial florist, who had made it to order; and the tree soon became a tree of knowledge to the whole assembly. The crowd, the crush, the squeeze, and pressure were beyond description. I began to think myself the greatest creature in the world, and that man was made only to adore me; while the noise, the lights, the brilliant variety of objects, operated powerfully on my nerves and senses.

As in moments of excitement I always have recourse to the last trick that has been taught me, I drew forth a cigar and put it in my bill. The uproar and shouts of laughter were now quite deafening. The whole scene put me in mind of one of

those great congresses of parrots, in which I had cut so brilliant a figure at home. There was the same noise, the same chatter, the same glittering plumage and flutter of movement, that distinguished our own assemblies. Many even of the heads recalled in their facial line the conformation of our tribe; and, to complete the illusion, there was the same eternal reiteration of the same sounds.

As soon as one pretty Poll had said, "Charming!" "Wonderful!" "Most curious!" all the others repeated the phrase a hundred times. From this I concluded that their vocabulary was much more limited than my own; and, in my excited vanity, I dropped my cigar, fluttered my wings, and burst forth into a long tirade of incoherent sentences, which sounded well, though it meant nothing; but it evidently passed for superhuman wit and intelligence. When, however, I got through my rhetoric, and fell into mere slang, the applause of the assembly was stupendous. "That's my hearty," "Bang up," "All's right," "Aisy, aisy," "Get along out of that," with a certain jerk with my tongue, and the imitation of the crack of a whip, produced more effect, than the most brilliant witticism ever uttered by the first diner-out of his day. "Where is the Duke of Boxborough?" said the Countess; "he must hear this. He will be delighted; this is quite in his way." "He is not here; he drives the heavy Birmingham to-night," said somebody. "No, he doesn't," replied a voice from the crowd.

The crowd instantly gave way; a look of deference was visible in every eye; and a tall young person, with a crane neck and a shambling gait, approached me. I saw at once that he was a bird of note. Several old cackling hens, each with a lively young bird of paradise under its wing, crowded round the phœnix of the evening. His unexpected appearance drew upon him all those bright glances which had hitherto been so exclusively directed to myself. In a word, the crane carried it hollow, and it was evidently in his power to keep me in or put me out of fashion by a word.

Like all shallow animals, I am extremely cunning in my own way. I at once, therefore, felt the necessity of toadying this ducal bird; and, accordingly, descending from my upas, and crawling towards him, I placed myself familiarly on his arm. "Bravo, Poll!" re-echoed on every side. "He certainly knows you, Duke," said a pretty creature, sideling up to him; "he has found you out as the most *distingué* of his auditors, and has taken possession of you with true *savoir faire*." "The deuce he has!" said the Duke, laughing and flattered; "well, let us see: who am I, Poll?" "A great catch, a great catch," was my immediate reply; and before the sensation had subsided at the pertinence of an answer which covered the fair young flatterer with blushes, the good-humoured Duke had seized my friend the flamingo by the shoulder, and pushing him into the middle of the circle, asked me, "Well, Donna Papagay, and who

is this — is *he* a great catch?" Influenced by the association of idea awakened by the flamingo's presence, I repeated, in a plaintive tone, "Poor younger brother."

It would be in vain to attempt giving any idea of my success. Among the number of my admiring audience, there was one, however, who witnessed my triumph with a look of suppressed rage that did not escape me. He had attracted my notice by a painful personal feeling not likely soon to be forgotten; for in my passage from the upas to the Duke's arm, he had put out his foot to crush me, and I was only saved from a horrible death by the usual subtlety of my movements: still, he had trod on one of the long feathers of my tail, and had hurt me severely. This creature struck me as closely resembling the carrion-vulture in his appearance. I afterwards found that he had an instinctive antipathy to successful merit of all kinds, and lived by hiring out his great foot to all who stood in need of its crushing assistance. Like the whole tribe of vultures, he was exceedingly ill-looking; and I was quite surprised to find him in such good company; but I soon learned that he made himself useful every where, and that, like his congener the vulture, which feeds on reptiles, he was a toad-eater. He was called by some a reviewer, by others a newspaper editor; but the carrion-vulture seemed to me to be his most appropriate appellation.

In the brilliant group by which I was surrounded,

I thought I recognised many others of the bird family. There were cock-sparrows and water-wagtails in abundance, several Solan geese, and not a few gulls. With the exception of the vulture, who evidently waited for another pounce, I was praised, caressed, and admired by all; and when, at the Duke's request, I was, as he worded it, "trotted out" by my friend the flamingo—when I had danced my "Gai Coco," sung, chanted, and preached, my fashion was miraculous, and I believe I may fairly say that no lion, human or animal, ever obtained in so short a time the same vogue.

At last the heat, excitement, and fatigue, became too powerful for my delicate frame; my head dropped, my wings flagged, and I fell lifeless. A great actress had fainted with less effect in the adjoining room, an hour before, (some said of jealousy at my drawing off the crowd from her altars). The vulture made another attempt, but my noble hostess was too nimble for him; she saved me in her arms, exclaiming, "I would not for the world have any thing happen to this bird. *Je perdrai en lui mon meilleur causeur.*"

My poor master was now, for the first time, remembered and called for, but in vain. "He had not," said the groom of the chambers, "come at all; but my carriage stopped the way, and my servant was in waiting." I was accordingly conveyed down on the Duke's arm, who took me from the Countess, and gave me to Midge.

The air at once revived me; and I was alive and

merry on my perch the next morning, devouring the words of the young Mont Martre, who came to recount to my master the particulars of my *grand succès* the night before—"when," he said, "Sheridan was witty, Siddons was sublime, and Moore delightful in vain!" I pitied these poor birds, whom, it appeared, I had thus prematurely put out of fashion; but I was quite unconscious that my own anti-apotheosis (as my little Lady Titmouse called it) was yet to come.

The next day, my master received a very polite note of thanks from the Countess, with an invitation to dinner to meet a few rational people. "We will keep the macaw for the world," she said, "for whom it is quite good enough" My poor master was pleased at my not being included in this invitation, and I have frequently heard him say that this was the most agreeable dinner he had ever been present at; for no one gave better dinners than the Countess, when she chose to assemble the agreeable and the interesting.

My master now became universally known as "Macaw Fitzforward," and was at once included among the exclusives; not that he brought me with him always, for he did so very rarely, and only when there were a very select few indeed. It was a mark of supreme *bon ton* to be able to say in a note of invitation, "We shall be few and good; you will meet Macaw Fitzforward and Donna Papagay." My master's principal label of notoriety was his manner of telling his first meeting

with me in Ireland. He took off the Irish brogue with great effect, and imitated the little postillion so much to the life, that Lady J—— used to say "If you have not heard George Fitzforward tell his Irish story, you have heard nothing."

But a higher honour awaited my master and myself than any yet conferred on us. The highest person in the state expressed a desire to make our acquaintance; and we received a command to attend an aquatic party on Virginia Water. What passed on the occasion of this most distinguished visit my master and myself were bound never to reveal. The silence of the seraglio, the mystery of the harem hung over the sublime retreat of the greatest of European potentates, whose existence alone was occasionally notified to his adoring and uninquiring subjects.

My master returned to town in high spirits, with a splendid snuffbox, enriched by a royal portrait, and I, with a medallion hung round my neck by a blue ribbon. The great personage, who thus decorated me, wore just such another ribbon, and seemed very proud of it. He was a grave and very gentle looking animal, and more resembled the horned owl than any other bird with which I was acquainted. Notwithstanding the secrecy of our movements, this flattering visit got into the papers, the greater number of which turned us into ridicule, while some of them asked, why were not Mr. ——, Mr. * * *, and Messrs. X Y Z, the most brilliant writers and the best company in his

Majesty's dominions, admitted into the royal circle? This, however, was pure envy, and disloyal invective; as another paper observed, "Is a king not to have the privilege of a private person, and to live with those who suit him best? If he prefer macaws and parrots to wits and philosophers, who are neither loyal nor religious, has he not a public duty to perform, and the public morals to protect?"

It was thus that our visit was defended by a journal, which my master read aloud to his young friend; and to my surprise, I found that the vulture, who had endeavoured to crush me at the Countess's assembly, on my first *entré* into high life, was the identical defender of royal favourites, macaws, parrots, and horned owls.

From this time forth I became a rage; presents of great value were made me; my perch was a throne, and my cage a museum; but, in the midst of these triumphs, and shortly after my master had obtained a renewed leave of absence, his regiment was ordered to Canada. A winter in Canada was a sentence of death to this young scion of a noble stock, in which a pulmonary complaint was hereditary. I heard his young friend argue with him on the necessity of leaving his regiment. "What!" he replied, reddening, "the first time it is ordered upon distant service?" His Honour took the alarm, and nothing could induce him to try for an exchange.

The day before his departure, his friend came to take leave of him; my master was much de-

prèssed, and he vainly endeavoured to struggle with his feelings. "Should I never see you again, my dear Mont Martre," he said, "keep this in memory of the pleasant evenings we have smoked together," and he presented him with his meerschaum; "but I have a parting favour to ask of you"—(and he strove to check his tears as he added), "my poor, faithful, affectionate macaw!" He paused; I came fluttering towards him, caressed his forehead, and muttered, "Poor younger brother." "No, Poll," he continued, "I will not risk *your* life, by transporting you to the icy regions of Canada—it would be a bad return for devotion like your's." "A great catch, a great catch!" I repeated, endeavouring to recommend myself. "Yes, but not on board a transport-ship, Poll, nor amongst the snows of Canada. Take her away, Mont Martre, in your cab; I will not give her to you; you are too giddy, and Poll would be a bore; but take her to your friend, Lady ——, Poll and I owe our fashion and our success to her: she is kind to animals, and steady in her attachment to friends. If I live to return, I will reclaim my macaw; if I do not, she cannot fall into better hands." My master kissed my head, placed me on my perch, threw himself for a moment into the flamingo's arms, and then, seizing his hat, rushed out of the house, leaving his schoolfellow, meerschaum, and myself in the room, from which every other trace of his existence had been removed by Midge in the previous morning.

It was about a year after the occurrence of this little scene, that, seated on the back of my lady's chair, I heard her ladyship read from a morning paper the following paragraph:—"Died in Upper Canada, the Hon. George Fitzforward, of the —— regiment, more known in the fashionable world by the name of Macaw Fitzforward. Captain F. was the tenth son of the late Earl of Rottentown, and brother of the present Earl, who has for some years resided for his health at Naples. This distinguished young soldier fell a victim to the severity of the climate, to which his military duties had exposed him." I listened attentively to this recital, and faintly uttering, "Poor younger brother," fell on my lady's shoulder. When I recovered, she was more than usually kind and caressing, and she said in a tone of satisfaction, "Never mind, Poll, you shall not suffer by this change of masters; you are mine now for life, and we shall reach posterity together." No doubt her ladyship's prophecy will be verified in my "forthcoming Memoirs," of which I have this day heard the preliminary puff, sent me by my kind friend the publisher.

I had been more than two years an inmate in the family of the Countess, and, in the interval, had seen more of the world, political and fashionable, than any or all the macaws that ever existed. The flower of my fashion, it is true, had budded, blown, and faded, in the course of a single season; but though I no longer monopolised the whole no-

toriety of the day, I still retained a considerable share of vogue and influence. It was possible to give a party, without making interest with my mistress to allow me to grace it with my presence; it was possible to obtain a hearing for Jekyl, Lutterell, and other wits, even though I was by; but though my position was less brilliant, it was more respectable. I was no longer a lion; I was one of the set, and waddled in and out of my lady's library, or drawing-room, with dowager duchesses and dowager wits, as if I belonged by birthright to "the order."

Envy was, as usual, at work, and I was disparagingly compared with the parrots, so largely quoted by Locke and Goldsmith, both of whom were said to be my superiors in the pertinence of their replies; but I really believe that their sole superiority was, that *they* were dead, and *I* was living. It is true, that when Henry VII.'s parrot (who had been educated in his palace of Westminster, beside the Thames), fell into the water, he called "A boat! twenty pounds for a boat!" but was not I, every day, making applications of equal felicity? I had, besides, one faculty, which placed me at an immeasurable distance above my tribe—my love of fun. Whenever I made a hit, I felt and enjoyed it, and I testified that I did so by my loud laugh, and clapping my wings—a demonstration of self-approbation common to most human wits and humorists, who generally laugh both before and after the utterance of their good things.

The public papers, too, made use of me as a sort of Pasquin; and, like him of Rome, I was made to answer for all the wicked, slanderous things, which the writers were paid for inditing. This kept up my consequence, and if it made me enemies, it made me also admirers; for the fabrications ascribed to me, all wicked as they were, appeared in papers under the especial patronage of the church.

It was thus that my name and *bon-mots* became so familiar to a dignitary, who always read the Sunday papers before the morning service, that, conceiving a high opinion of my loyalty and right thinking, he expressed a wish to make my acquaintance. My lady was delighted, and cards went out for a grey dinner-party, consisting, as she said, of some of the noblest pillars of social order. When these grave and illustrious personages were assembled before dinner, I was brought in as an amusement, to pass away that *mauvais quart d'heure*. The library, on the ground-floor, where the guests were seated, looked so like a rookery, and there was something in the party so ravenish and jackdaw-like, that I fancied myself in the Propaganda, or among the Protestant brotherhood of Sourcraut Hall; and I forthwith struck up my *Gloria in excelsis*, which I followed by an audible enunciation of my confession of faith.

A general exclamation of surprise and edification burst from every lip. He, who seemed the chief of the company, and whom my lady called

my lord, descanted for a considerable time on the wonderful power of Providence in producing such a bird; saying many things, which struck me as being not very curious or original, but which seemed to affect the listeners with great awe and reverence. Perched on my lady's arm, I turned my head from side to side with a look of inquiry, being greatly amused by the double likeness of the speaker to Father Flynn, and to the jackdaw of the Honourable G. Fitzforward's sick chamber. So, when this orator took me on his arm, and the Countess cried out, "Oh! Poll, you are not aware of the honour done you; you little know whose is the arm that supports you;" I screamed out "He is an old quack, and a regular humbug."

His lordship started, as if electrified, and let me fall on the ground. By the fall my leg was broken, and I became immediately as silent as the rest of the company, and insensible of all that was passing around me.

When I came to myself I was lying before the fire in the housekeeper's room—a subterranean apartment—from which, during three tedious years, I was never permitted to emerge. In short, I was pronounced to be socially dead; my want of all judgment and discretion, my too ready and fatal wit, had nearly proved my destruction. His lordship, whom I had so grossly insulted, would hear of no apology from my mistress; and the chaplain, who was present, declared that I had been crammed for the occasion. Had not the piety of my poor

dear lady been well known, she too would have been involved in my disgrace; as it was, she was attacked in the Sunday papers; and only appeased her calumniators by a friendly paragraph, inserted by the vulture, stating that she had sacrificed her macaw to public opinion; and that this clever, but ill-taught bird, had been handed over to her ladyship's chicken-butcher, and by him put to death; that its body had been sent to Surgeons' Hall for dissection, and its skin stuffed and transmitted to a public museum for the study of future ornithologists. In the course of the ensuing season, I was as much forgotten, as if I had never lived; and when, after three years' incarceration, I crept up to the back-hall, and was accidentally seen by Lady Augusta, she said to my lady, "So you have got a macaw; by the by, had not you a parrot or a monkey, or something that made a great sensation some years back, and used to talk?" "Probably," said my lady drily; "but I am taking great pains to teach this macaw *not* to talk."

I took the hint; and, painfully aware of the penalty that waits on wit, I tried hard to be as dull, and as common-place, as a neighbour of our's, whom my mistress, by constantly citing as a model of prudence, had made *my* "Mrs. Grundy." This neighbour, in the course of a long and tranquil life, had excited neither envy nor hatred, had got into no scrapes, suffered no persecution, and had never risked being killed by a Secretary-bird, kicked by a preacher-monkey, having its leg broken by a

raven-jackdaw, or being imprisoned for three years only, for being superior to the generality of its species.

This fortunate creature was the pet tortoise of our near neighbour, Lady Dorothy Dawdle, an old lady who was herself of the tortoise tribe, and possessed many good qualities in common with her favourite reptile. The tortoise was a constant subject of reference for my lady, on the occasion of any of my unlucky hits, or mischievous *quid pro quo's*. I never broke a china cup, gnawed a buhl clock, choked a kitten, or pecked at the housemaid's heels, but the Lady Dorothea's tortoise (whom, by the by, I was frequently brought to visit) was instantly held up to me as an example and a reproach.

His story was indeed exemplary. Brought, while young from the West Indies, by a legacy-hunting nephew, whom Lady Dorothea had long survived, it was placed in her ladyship's little garden; and it had managed to travel through the circumference, twelve feet by ten, in the space of ten years. The movements of its feet answered to those of the hour-hand of a clock. In the course of its long life, it had shown no sign of sympathy with any living thing, nor any token of intelligence, beyond its own personal wants, which were few, and its appetites, which were voracious. Loving warmth, but hating light, it passed the sultry hours of summer under the umbrella of a large cabbage; and remained, during the winter, torpid

in a hole, which it had formed with slow and stupid assiduity—its sole amusement and occupation. Still its dullness was alive to whatever interfered with its own interests; and disliking the shower that refreshed, as much as the beam that illuminated, it shuffled off on the first gathering of a cloud above its ponderous shell, over which the wheel of a loaded cart might have passed without injury.

Supplied, independently of any effort of its own, with every species of food and comfort, the only sign of recognition it ever showed was to Lady Dorothea Dawdle herself; who, every summer's morning for thirty years, had fed it from her parlour window with meal-cakes. It then hobbled from its cabbage-leaf with awkward alacrity towards its benefactress; and this was the only intercourse that ever subsisted between them. They both died in the same year. The lady was first conveyed to the tombs of her ancestors, having bequeathed her tortoise to her physician. This gentleman, a celebrated anatomist, tried the horrible experiment of Redi upon the poor animal; and having made a hole in its skull, and taken out the brains, was surprised to find it continue alive. The tortoise, set at liberty in this condition, moved off without suffering the slightest injury from the operation. It lived on for many months without brains, as well as with them, and at last died in one of its fits of torpidity, merely because it had forgotten to awake.

This was the model, the bright particular star of discretion, so often quoted for my edification by my mistress, who used to finish her admonitions with, "Oh, Poll, Poll, when will you have the prudence of Lady Dorothea Dawdle's tortoise?" "When he ceases to be Lady ——'s macaw," replied, one day, my little Lady Titmouse, who was always my champion and friend on these occasions of obloquy and reproof.

Since my resuscitation, after my three years' imprisonment and retirement from society, my life has gone on calmly and rationally enough. My lady had made a vow never again to run the risk of admitting me into parties, and she has kept it. Banished from the drawing-room and boudoir, I am still welcome in the dressing-room and library, and am sometimes tolerated at the breakfast and dinner-table, or suffered to follow my mistress about her pretty little garden. Time has done by me as by the human species, and though I am really the Ninon of my race, and occasionally dance "Gai Coco," and sing "Polly, put the kettle on," to the delight of the old housekeeper and the guests of the steward's room, still diminished animal spirits and a better taste incline me to conceal, rather than exhibit, my surviving talents and capabilities. I have long since put off paint, and have even had thoughts of becoming serious, especially since my lady occasionally gives a tea and tract party, because, like a true philosopher, she will go *avec son siécle*. Here then I shall terminate my memoir,

for the good are seldom amusing, the wise never; and I have entered into a formal agreement with my publisher to forfeit half the price of my copyright, if this autobiography is found to contain more sense, wisdom, or information, than shall prove palateable to the public, or to exceed the standard measure of those "fashionable productions," by which the polite world are accustomed to form *l'esprit et le cœur*, to cull their tastes, and select their opinions.*

* The hero of the above auto-biography was the Macaw, well known in the circles of London fashion, of the late Dowager Countess of Cork and Orrery. Her ladyship, having written to me from a country-house, complaining of a dearth of amusing literature, and royalty commanding that I (forsooth) should write something to meet the occasion, I answered, that I was to the full as dull as the rest of the trade; but if her Macaw would dictate its memoirs, I should be happy to prepare them for the press. Such was the origin of the foregoing *bagatelle*.

LUXURIES AND NECESSARIES.

"En fait d'inutilités, il ne faut que le nécessaire."
Champfort.

Luxury is a very ambiguous term, a thing of circumstance, equally puzzling to moralists, legislators, and political economists;—an eel, no sooner grasped than gone, a chameleon, changing its hue in every different aspect. Like the *ignis fatuus*, it is here, and there, and every where, except precisely the spot to which it has been hunted down and followed.

In Ireland, the accompaniment of salt to a potato is a luxury, not always within the reach of the industrious. Among the Cossacks, a clean shirt is more than a luxury—it is an effeminacy; and a Scotch nobleman is reported to have declared, that scratching one's self is a luxury too great for any thing under royalty! The Russians, it should seem, (there is no disputing tastes) hold train oil to be a prime luxury, and they prefer a tallow candle to white bait.

A group of the autocrat's lieges were once seen following an exciseman, on the quays of Dover, to plunder the oil-casks, as they were successively opened, for that functionary's mystical operations: so, too, a poor Finland woman, who, for her sins, had married an Englishman, and followed him to his native country, was very glad to avail herself of her husband's death to leave a land, where the people were so miserably off, as to be without a regular supply of seal's flesh for their daily dinner. Her affection for him had long balanced her hankering after this native luxury; but no sooner was he removed, than her lawyer-like attachment for the *seals* resumed its pristine force, and, like Proteus released from his chains,* she abandoned civilized life, and all its blandishments, to get back to her favourite shores, and "the meat she delighted to feed upon."

"If I were rich," said a farmer's labouring boy, "I would eat fat pudding, and ride all day on a gate." This was his highest idea of luxury; and small as his imaginative powers may appear, the luxuries of many of the great are not less strange or monotonous. Fat pudding is, at least, as good as overkept venison; and as for riding all day on a gate, it is, out of all doubt, as amusing as riding from London to York against time, or walking a thousand miles in a thousand hours.

It is, however, less the quality of the indulgence

* Πρωτευς φωκας, και Θοινης ων, ενημε.—*Theocritus.*

than its extent, that forms the debateable ground of discussion. It is not so much whether the thing be in itself fitted to give pleasure, as whether, being agreeable, the indulgence be, or be not, fit and lawful. Diogenes, who prided himself on cutting his coat according to his cloth, and thought himself a greater man in proportion to the privations to which he submitted, placed his luxuries in idleness and sunshine—just as our modern Gnathos do in "any *given* quantity of claret"—because it costs nothing; and he seems to have relished these enjoyments with as much sensuality, as Plato did his fine house and his delicate fare. Alexander, however, who had something else to do with his time, probably thought this basking in the sun a very luxurious extravagance.

It is recorded of the same philosopher, that seeing some one drink from the hollowed palm of his hand, he threw away his cup as a luxurious superfluity; but even in this he did not carry his definition of luxury so far as those sectarians, who have prevailed in almost all religious communities, and who, believing that the Deity created man for the express purpose of inflicting on him every species of torture, have inveighed against the most innocent gratifications, and have termed every thing that administers to the senses, a luxury. These theologians will not allow a man to eat his breakfast with a relish; but impute it as a vice if he smacks his lips, though it be but after a draught of water. Nay, some there have been, who have

thought good roots and Adam's ale too great luxuries for a Christian, and they have, "of malice aforethought," ill cooked their vegetables, and mixed them with ashes (or even more disgusting condiments), to mortify the flesh, as they called it; *i. e.* to offer a sacrifice of their natural feelings to the dæmon, which they have mistaken for their god.

"They manage these things much better" among the saints of our latter times, who by no means put the creature comforts under a ban, whatever objections they may entertain against the luxury of a dance, or of a laugh at Liston. The orthodox clergy, who give a more liberal construction to things, and deem few articles luxuries, for which they can afford payment, consider port wine, roast beef, and plum pudding, as mere necessaries of life; nay, there are those who hint that these articles of religion are the things really understood to be in jeopardy, whenever the University of Oxford, and other true Protestants, sound the alarm, that the church is in danger.

A certain king having told a bishop reproachfully, that the apostles did not ride in coaches, the prelate replied (making a small hole in chronology), "True, sire, but that was in the time of the shepherd kings." Other times, other opinions, and it would certainly be false logic to pin the right reverend barons of the upper house down to the letter of St. Paul, and to christen the necessary splendour of the modern church by the odious appellation of luxury.

Whatever may be the notions of luxury entertained by the anchoret, or the Protestant pluralist, whatever may be their differences in the application of the term, they both agree as to its being essentially wrong; and they uniformly apply the epithet to the habits of their neighbours in the worst sense, as a thing to be reprobated, "be the same," (as the lawyers say), "more or less." Not so the political economists, who being mostly either atheists, or, what is worse still, dissenters, stoutly maintain that luxury is not a thing *malum in se;* that consumption (thereby meaning enjoyment) is the great business of human life; and that whatever a man vehemently desires, is to him a necessary, and is dangerous only in the use, when the indulgence is purchased at the price of an ultimate superior gratification.

Between these extremes there is an infinite variety of middle terms, in which different individuals take their stand; insomuch, that there are scarcely any two persons who unite in their classification of the things which are necessary, and those which are luxurious. This is one of the points on which the French and English disagree, *toto cælo:* the French utterly despising many indulgences, which we consider as first necessaries; and esteeming as necessaries many things which we deem superfluous. This leading difference gives a decided bias to the industry and ingenuity of the respective populations. We have the authority of our nurses for declaring, that the French

invented ruffles (lace and cambric), and that the English superadded the shirt; as also that the English improved on the feather, by appending to it the hat. Many old ladies, of much higher intellectual pretensions than the honest women from whom we derive these facts, assign this difference as the reason why the artists of Paris are expert in gilding and gewgaws, without being able to construct a lock of any cunning for their doors, or a fastening for their windows, fit to be seen in a Christian country.—*Vide* the "Loyal English Tourists," *passim.*

Of these things no reasonable man will doubt. "*Un homme de bon sens croit toujours ce qu'on lui dit, et qu'il trouve par écrit;*" * but it must not, on that account, be set down as a reproach against our excellent neighbours and "natural enemies;" for, as Voltaire has justly remarked, the superfluous is a most necessary consideration,† and its cultivation is the very test and criterion of civilization. It is, therefore, a great consolation to know, that the English are making rapid strides to overtake the Parisians, and are growing as expert at superfluities, as the most refined Frenchman can be, for the soul of him.

Since the general peace, the Englishman's ideas on this subject have been marvellously enlarged; and they have arranged a long catalogue of articles as primary necessaries, which their more

* Rabelais.

† "Le superflu, chose très nécessaire.

modest ancestors ranked as luxuries, fit only for sybarites, or *des marquis à talons rouges.* This should be a matter of sincere rejoicing to all true patriots. *Venimus ad summam fortunæ;* and Birmingham is as great in bubble as in steam-engines, in false jewellery as in counterfeit halfpence!

A civilized gentleman differs from a savage principally in the multiplicity of his wants; and Mandeville has proved, in his "Fable of the Bees," that extravagance is the nursing mother of commerce, just as the enormity of the national debt proves the national prosperity. What, indeed, are railroads and macadamisation, man-traps that break no bones, patent corkscrews, and detonating fowling-pieces, safety coaches, and cork legs, but luxuries at which the wisdom of our ancestors would have scoffed; yet how could the nation now get on without them?

It is perfectly true, that our "Henrys and Edwards" contrived to beat their enemies unassisted by such inventions; but so they did, without Protestant ascendency, an article confessedly of primary necessity. Books, too, which were a luxury almost unknown in former times, are now so indispensable, that there is hardly a mechanic who has not his little library; while a piano-forte has become as necessary to a farmhouse, as a mangle or a frying-pan; and there are actually more copies printed of "Cherry ripe," than of "Tull's Husbandry." Is not a silver fork also characteristic of a civilized establishment? and is not a Mussulman,

who dispenses both with knife and fork, a barbarian and a savage?

It is no answer to this remark that the Turk, though as yet but a dabbler in European refinements, is luxurious in the number of wives he thinks necessary to a decent *ménage*, while the Englishman finds one to be more than essential to enjoyment. The difference is rather formal than real; for if the European stints himself most stoically in the article of wives, taking only one (of his own) at a time, he finds ample compensation for the self-denial, in the liberties he takes with the wives of his neighbours.

Henry IV., of France, had but one coach between himself and his queen; whereas, in these our happier days, no respectable couple can dispense with separate conveyances; besides a travelling chariot, a barouch, a cab, and a dennet, at the very least; to which, if they be at their ease, they must add a pony phaeton, and a state chariot for court.

Within the memory of the present generation, the necessaries of the table have received a notable increase. Champagne and ices are no longer the luxuries of the aristocrat, but have taken their places at the tables of the middle classes, as the indispensable complements of a family dinner; and they figure in establishments, in which a bottle of humble port, and a supernumerary pudding, were formerly esteemed luxuries, fit only for honouring the more solemn rites of festival hospitality.

A cigar and a meerschaum, again, are necessary

to the existence of a well appointed man of fashion; and a gentleman cannot possibly show at Melton, without a dozen hunters, and two or three hacks, to ride to cover.

No one in his senses would tax these things as luxuries, or would blame a friend for getting into the King's Bench, in order to obtain them. Even the judges of the land, "those sage, grave men," and numerous juries of tradesmen, have borne ample testimony to the reasonableness of indulging in such indispensable wants of life, by the large measure they have given to the term "necessaries," in their verdicts between extortionate creditors and guardians litigating in behalf of the minors their wards.

Some one has found, or invented, a story of a shipwrecked traveller hailing a gallows as a sure token of a civilized community; and, in a certain sense, this may be the case, else why should moral England have remained so long the hanging nation *par excellence?* Still there is a better criterion, a more genuine and indisputable test of polity, to be found in a well contrived system of insolvent laws, which succeeds perfectly in discharging a maximum of debts with a minimum of assets, "*citò, tutò, et jucundè.*" When luxuries become necessaries, insolvency is the best safety-valve to discharge the surplus dishonesty of the people. It is much better that a gentleman should thus annually get rid of his duns with the smallest possible quantity of corporeal inconvenience, than that he should be driven

to seek his freedom on the king's highway, or commit Nature's great act of bankruptcy, by paying her debt, and all others at the same time, with the trigger of his own pistol.

From these considerations it is clear that luxury is at once the cause and the exponent of civilization; that the more a man consumes, the more he is a man; and that the affixing a subaudition of reprobation in the application of the term, is not only a *petitio principii*, but a downright calumny.

But though necessity be a conventional idea that expands and contracts with circumstances, (like the tent in the Arabian Tales, which, when folded, would lie in the hand, and, when opened, would shelter an army,) still the thing has its limits, determined by the physical capabilities of the animal. There is a point at which the inconvenience of superfluities so far exceeds their utility, that luxury becomes converted into a perfect nuisance. The most splendid feast that ever a corporator sat before, would be nothing but an annoyance to the guest whose stomach is already overladen with food; and the Roman invention of emetics never took root among even the most extravagant nations. The most enlarged experience shows that it is utterly impossible to add one more superfluous meal to those already established by universal usage; and many are the victims who have paid with their lives in a fit of apoplexy, for their persevering zeal to enlarge the necessities of the stomach.

In dress, also, the muscular force of the body sets bounds to superfluity of decoration. Ear-rings must not be too heavy to be carried, nor can a bracelet, by its size, be suffered to impede the motion of the arm between the plate and the mouth. "Barbaric pomp and gold" is an imposing spectacle, but a medallion as large and as cumbrous as a shield, appended to a lady's bosom, would be any thing but a luxury. So, in the other extreme, a watch should not be so small as to render the dial-plate illegible, nor should a shoe be so tight as to lame the wearer for life.

Beauty, it has been said, should rise above such considerations; for there are resources in vanity that will reconcile man, and woman too, to martyrdom. But these should not be exhausted wantonly; and, in the search after gratification, as in economy, it is ill policy to light the candle at both ends. The true philosopher extracts the greatest good from all things: fools alone, as Horace has it, run into one vice in trying to avoid the other. In superfluities, as in every thing else, a wise man will confine himself (in the words of the motto) to what is necessary; and reserve alike his purse and his person for other occasions of enjoyment, which will never be wanting, while there is wealth to stimulate industry, and imagination to diversify convenience.

There is one point of luxury on which modern caprice has passed the bounds of enjoyment, and that is, in the vast increase of superfluities, which, of late

years, have become primary necessaries in a well furnished house. Here, for the nonce, is a revolution, indeed! — a revolution more formidable than the French emancipation from slavery and wooden shoes, or the reform in Parliament itself! We, most of us, remember the time when one tea-table, two or three card-tables, a pier-glass, a small detachment of chairs, with two armed corporals to command them, a square piece of carpet in the middle of the room, and two or three narrow strips of stuff or of silk for curtains, pulled up and down with a cord like the green siparium of a theatre, made a very decent display in the drawing (or as it was then preposterously called the dining) room. As yet rugs for the hearth were not, and twice a day did Betty go upon her knees to scour the naked marble slab.

In the bed-rooms of those days, a paltry slip of carpet round the bed was the maximum of woollen integument allowed to the floor, for protecting the feet of the midnight wanderer from his couch. Multiplied vases for ablution were unknown, and mahogany boot-jacks unthought of. Psyches were not introduced to the "lady's chamber," much less to the dressing-room of the beau. The staircase was not thoroughly covered with the richest products of the loom, and flowing draperies before the doors were not deemed necessary "to expel the winter's flaw." No golden serpents then twisted their voluminous length across the entire wall of the room, nor did richly carved cods' heads and

shoulders (under the denomination of dolphins), or glittering spread eagles, with a brass ring in their mouths, support fenestral decorations, rivalling the display of a Waterloo-House vender of printed calicoes.

Thus far the change is, I admit, an improvement. Nay, ladders to go to bed with may be tolerated; though many a man has broken his shins against them in the dark. Neither is it wise to object to sofas and ottomans in any reasonable proportion; but the most liberal may protest, and that in the strongest terms, against such a multiplication and variety of easy chairs, as effectually exclude the possibility of easy sitting; and against that overweening increase of spider tables, which interferes with rectilinear progression.

A harp, mounted on a sprawling sounding-board, (although it be a stumbling-block to the feet of the short-sighted,) must be considered as an absolute necessary; and a piano-forte resembling a coffin should occupy the centre of the smallest possible drawing-room; "the court awards it, and the law doth give it"—but why multiply foot-stools, till there is no taking a step in safety? An Indian cabinet, also, or a Buhl *armoire*, are either, or both of them, fit and becoming; but it cannot be right to make a broker's shop of your best apartment.

A library table that might dine a dozen of guests, with an inkstand as large as a pastrycook's shew twelfth cake, are just and lawful. A machine like a dumb waiter to hold Walter Scott's novels,

or a cabinet edition of French, English, and Italian poets, is a *sine qua non*. Ditto, an ornamental escrutoire; and a *nécessaire* for needlework is, (if there be meaning in language,) perfectly necessary. These, with an adequate contingent of musical snuff-boxes, *or-molu* clocks, Chinese beakers, porcelain figures, alabaster vases, flower-pots, *pots pourris*, stuffed birds and butterflies, and a discreet superfluity of cut-paper nondescripts, screens, albums, toys, prints, caricatures, novels, souvenirs, and illuminated folios, must be allowed to the taste and refinement of the times. But surely some space should be left for depositing a coffee cup, or placing aside a useful volume, when the hand may require to be relieved from its weight; or when it may be desirable to take a pinch of snuff, or agreeable to wipe one's forehead. Josses and torsos have the *entrée* into a genteel apartment; but they are not entitled to a monopoly of the space: nor are Roman antiquities, or the statues even of Chantrey or of Canova themselves, to be justified in usurping the elbow-room of living men and women.

Most unfortunately for the peace of mind of mankind, there are too many husbands, who, with houses of the smallest possible dimensions, possess wives of the most enlarged taste; and the disproportion between these domestic blessings is so great, that the owners cannot move without the risk of a heavy pecuniary loss from breakage, and the heavier personal infliction of perpetual imputations of awkwardness. It is no easy matter to put on a smiling

countenance, whenever a friend, accustomed to some reasonable latitude of motion, runs his devastating chair against a high-priced work of art, or overturns a table laden with "an infinite thing," in costly *bijouterie*.

It is becoming daily more indispensable to make it a point with one's wife to exclude from her visiting list ladies who pay their morning calls with a retinue of spoiled children: but the rule cannot always be observed; and one urchin with his whip will destroy more in half an hour, than the worth of a month's average domestic expenditure. Oh! how hateful are the little fidgeting, fingering, dislocating imps! A bull in a china shop is innocuous, to the most orderly and amenable of them.

The general merits of nick-nacks is unquestionable. Ornaments surely are ornamental; and works of art afford amusement of the highest order. But then perfection is every thing in them; and a crack or a flaw destroys all the pleasures of an intelligent beholder. Yet how few are the collectors, exposed to these visitations, who have a statue, with all its members, a Chelsea-china shepherdess, with her full complement of fingers, a vase with both its handles, a snuff-box that performs its waltz, or a volume of prints that is not dogs-eared, stained, and inkspotted! These are serious evils; but they are among the lightest which flow from the *aliquid plus quam satis est* of decoration.

Perpend the matter well, reader, bear it ever in mind, that houses are made to live in, and not for

museums; set the toyman at defiance; keep *vertu* at arm's length; and, in matters of superfluity, let nothing tempt you to exceed what is strictly necessary.

ANECDOTES AND CONVERSATIONS

OF

THE REV. THOMAS BOTHERUM, S.T.P.,

ARCHDEACON OF LEATHERHEAD, RECTOR OF

BRAINTOWN PARVA *cum* MUCKLE PUDDING, F.S.A.,

&c. &c. &c.

"Così s'en vanno l'arti, ed i magisteri,
Tutti in rovina, e non è chi sollevi,
Chiaro ingegno, di cui fama si speri."—
Ariosto. Satire.

"Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
Tam cari capitis."—*Hor.*

It is now many years since I first promised myself the pleasure of committing to paper those passages of the life of an ever-to-be-lamented friend, which came within my own notice, and of preserving for posterity a slight sketch of the domestic habits and table conversations of a great man. But procrastination (it has been well observed) is the thief of time: and the numerous memoranda I collected in

those happy days in which he was yet amongst us, still lay untouched in the drawers of my bureau.

I take shame to myself for this neglect; and the more so, when I reflect that, in the present degenerate times, in which steam-engines have taken precedence of classical lore, and "rude unwashed mechanicals" hold their heads above the doctors of our universities, the reverence for illustrious public characters has so much diminished. If "a great man's memory may outlive his life," it certainly is not now by "building churches," no, nor by adorning them either, that he will reach posterity. "*Virtus laudatur et alget*," principle is disregarded, and Popery and Dissent overspread the land.

At the eleventh hour, therefore, I take up my pen; and while every paltry playwright and actor is permitted to thrust forward his two octavo volumes of presumptuous auto-biography, I shall, ere I descend to the grave, consign to the press a precious record of the *gesta et dicta* of Archdeacon Botherum, leaving behind me, for the benefit of my children, a monument of that intercourse, which, like the friendship of Sir Philip Sydney, may be a boast and an ornament to the end of time.

Thomas Botherum was, as he himself assured me, the son of an honest, but small farmer, residing in Cumberland, near to the borders of Scotland. His father had been deeply implicated in "the 45," and never, to his dying day, totally abandoned all hope of the good cause. It was a boast in the family that his house was for years a principal link

in the chain of communication between the Pretender and his friends in the north.

Having a numerous offspring, he determined to bring one son, at least, up to the church; and Thomas being a child of grave habits, regular in his devotional responses, from the time he could first read, and moreover of a sickly habit, and unfit for farming-work, he was selected to study at an endowed grammar-school in an adjoining county, famous as the sucking mother of many illustrious churchmen.

Here, under the instruction of an able divine, he laid the foundation of that profound erudition, which afterwards raised him to such enviable distinction. "I was not," he was wont to say, modestly, "a lad of precocious parts; and am indebted for any little fame I may have acquired, to the assiduity of the doctor's right arm. I never knew an eminent man in the university, who had not been bred at a flogging school."

From this seat of discipline, in due time, he moved to Cambridge, where he was principally noted, as I have learned from more than one cotemporary, for his persevering industry, his blue woollen hose (knitted by his mother,) by his peculiarly broad Cumberland accent, (which a long intercourse with the world never totally obliterated,) and for a sly practise of stealing into the fields towards sun-set, to shoot partridges, after the manner of our ancestors, on the ground.

He mixed very little with his fellow-students,

read hard, and gained no prizes, (never having, indeed, sat for any,) but took a good senior optime degree, which, in the fulness of time, led to a fellowship.

I was but seven years old, when the decease of old Zachary Bluebottle prepared the way for Archdeacon Botherum's (he was not then archdeacon) collation to the parish, in which my father had his habitual residence. The presentation to the living is in Saint John's College; and Botherum, who had already an eye to the mastership, accepted of this collegiate ostracism, I believe, with regret; but the income was considerable, the parishioners orthodox, and the doctor, with the characteristic shrewdness of the north, not insensible to the merits of a bird in the hand.

Still, however, when a man has been accustomed to be capped by sizers, and to have his jokes laughed at by complaisant fellow-commoners, the obscurity of a remote country village is any thing but flattering; and I fear the doctor was more pressed by the "*res angusta domi*," than by any decided preference, when he accepted the preferment. Botherum had likewise inveterate college habits; and was so unprepared for housekeeping, that, (as he used facetiously to repeat,) when he left the college gate, one fine summer's morning, to take possession, having four shirts, a pair of black cassimere small clothes, and a set of sermons strapped in a portmanteau behind the saddle of his dapple mare,

he cried out to the dean, "*mea omnia mecum porto.*"

This dapple mare, by the by, was the identical subject of that excellent jest, the memory of which is not lost to this day in Cambridge. The doctor was in the habit of preaching half-guinea sermons for the incumbents of the parishes of the Isle of Ely, during their occasional absences from home; a practice not unusual among the poorer members of the university: and in the pride or the indolence of his heart, he had bought the animal to carry him on his Sunday expeditions. "Our master"—so the doctor often told me the story—"rated me for this extravagance, which (he said) was ill suited to the narrowness of my means." "*That,*" I replied, "was the very reason why I bought the animal, in obedience to the Horatian precept—*Æquam* [*equam*] *memento rebus in arduis.*" The combination-room re-echoed with laughter, and all St. John's rung with the joke during the remainder of that term.

The arrival of the new rector was a great event in our parish. A merry peal was sounded from the steeple; and it was upon this occurrence, that the curate, a Trinity man, and moreover about to lose the curacy, vented his spleen in a pun, which was afterwards embodied in a well-known Cambridge epigram:—for Squire Breakneck, happening to ride through the town at the moment, and asking what all that noise meant, (it being neither the anniversary, as he expressed himself, of the king's *ascen-*

sion, nor of the gunpowder plot) the curate contemptuously replied, "they are only ringing a hog." *

My father, who was, like the rest of the parish, a zealous high churchman, and old-fashioned enough to fear God and honour his king, was not the last to call on his pastor; and, on the next Sunday after his arrival, our worthy rector gave his blessing to our plenteous table; where, ever afterwards, on the return of the Lord's day, he was a constant guest. On these occasions, "Church and King," it may be supposed, was never forgotten; and congeniality of opinion, not less than the substantial fare of our hospitable and truly English board, contributed to procure for the family the unceasing and affectionate friendship of this great, but humble-minded, man.

* The members of St. John's College, Cambridge, are nicknamed "hogs." The epigram alluded to was made by the late Sir B. Harwood, on the knighting of Sir J. Pennington, Professor of Physic, and Harwood's mortal foe. It ran as follows:

"When the knight of St. John's from St. James's came down,
The bells were set ringing throughout the whole town:
A blue-stocking'd Sizer, alarmed at the noise,
Asked one of the starve-gutted bedmaker's boys
What the cause of it was. 'What?' replied the arch dog,
'Why, there's always a noise, when they're ringing a hog.'"

The biographist does not, however, mean to assert that Sir B. Harwood stole the jest. Great wits often jump; and he has no special reason for supposing that the curate's *bon-mot* had reached the ears of the facetious Professor of Anatomy. This observation is due to justice.

Even now, at the distance of nearly fifty years, I remember the consternation which his first visit occasioned in the nursery. No episcopal visitation of Horsley, or of Majendie, ever struck greater awe into the assembled curates. The authoritative tone of a voice long accustomed to command attention in the lecture-room, and the stern contraction of Botherum's bushy eyebrows, when patting us on the head, and asking each a question from the catechism, were almost too much for our tender nerves. Fortunately, we answered without much hesitation, or being very wide of the mark; and he called us good children. Turning to my father, he continued, with much complacency, "Mr. Tomlins, you have made a great way in my esteem. Parents are too apt to neglect the timely inculcation of a prejudice in favour of the church's dogmas into the infant mind. He who fails to sow the seeds of orthodoxy early in the spring, will be sure to reap in the autumn a harvest of sectarianism and indifference."

The doctor, I have said, brought into rural life many college habits. He had, among others, no objection to a glass of good port: and, though he never disgraced the cloth by a positive unsteadiness either of head or foot, yet sometimes, "*indulgens genio*," he would in safe society, and among men of sound principles, take a cheerful glass; and then it was that he would open the storehouse of his erudition, pouring forth ample quotations from Longus or Tertullian, Tryphiodorus or Origen, St. Chry-

sostom (whose verses he greatly praised) or Dr. Sacheverel; now and then cracking a merry jest from Aristophanes, to the great delight of the country squires, who were wont to declare that since Latin was no longer quoted in sermons, they did not wonder at the increase of sectarians; and that the Archdeacon's Greek did them good to hear, though they did not understand a word of it. I must do his good-nature the justice to add, that he never spared to translate, when properly requested,—that is, if the passage had nothing indelicate in it. True genius is ever condescending!

The Archdeacon, who justly thought that there is a time for all things, and that too much severity is a misprision of Presbyterianism, was fond of a game at backgammon. He wrote a treatise to prove that this was the game invented by Palamedes, and not chess; averring that, in his own person, it had often made him forget his supper till it was quite cold. He confessed that he played, on an average, twelve hundred hits in a year; and so great was the hold the game had obtained over his imagination, that he not unfrequently illustrated his discourse by metaphors taken from its technicalities. I remember that when he was once sorely pressed in an argument by a malignant, who had clearly proved an oversight in the military operations of the cabinet of the day, which might have ruined the campaign if properly taken advantage of, he triumphantly replied with a voice of thunder, "Like enough, sir; every body mistakes sometimes

—*humanum est errare*—but, whatever you, sir, may think of the matter, a blot is no blot till it is hit:" the reply was unanswerable.

The Archdeacon's temper, like that of his father, was equable and bland. Two things alone were apt to disturb his equanimity; a Whig and a Papist. Hence he was puzzled what consideration to give to the Scotch rebels. Though his father, as I have said, had been out in the rebellion, the son had so far submitted to the influence of Cambridge politics, as to have relaxed somewhat from the family jacobitism. The attachment of the Highlanders to the divine right of the Pretender he could not deny to have been commendable, but, then, that Pretender was a Papist, and the Pope was anti-Christ! I remember his telling me, in a confidential conversation, in which he opened his whole heart, that he never could altogether make up his mind concerning those "ἀπερίξωματοι politicians;" but, he added in a forgiving tone, "the breechless dogs loved their king after all."

The Archdeacon, like many of the Cambridgemen of his day, was given to tobacco; and never said better things, than when he puffed care away after dinner. Had he lived to the present times, he would doubtless have delighted in the estimation which his favourite weed has attained; but he would not have encouraged the modern innovation of cigars. The true Virginia, as he himself used to say, "ascends into the brain," and "favours contemplation;" whereas it is well known in both

Universities, that the under-graduates who smoke cigars, never trouble themselves to think at all; and if they are not always *plucked*, never get out of the ranks of the οἱ πολλοί.

Who knows but that this difference may be an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence for blinding the perverse people of South America, who have so long provoked its wrath by their idolatrous adherence to the "slough of a slavish superstition?"

My mother, who by long intercourse with the Archdeacon had ceased to hold him in that awe with which the other females of the parish were accustomed to regard him, (so much does familiarity breed contempt), used often to lecture him for what she called his beastly habit of smoking before the women; and she once carried her vituperation so far, (the clergyman of a neighbouring parish being present), that the doctor lost his temper, and replied with such caustic severity, that a shyness took place between them. After a long tirade, which reminded us of the sixth satire of Juvenal, he terminated by launching against her the following epigram:—

> "Aspide quid pejus? tigris; quid tigride? dæmon;
> Dæmone quid? mulier: quid muliere? nihil."

Which being maliciously interpreted to my mother, she vowed that she would never forgive it.

For three Sundays, notwithstanding all my father's authority, she sulked, and retired to her bedroom immediately after dinner. We were all sorry

for the breach, and the doctor as much as any of us; but his clerical dignity would not suffer him to own himself in the wrong. At length, with much difficulty, we brought my mother to apologize; and this she did with such a truly feminine resignation, that our friend gladly availed himself of the excuse to make his peace. It was on this event, that she presented him with a silver tobacco-box, with his own portrait engraved on the lid, and a pipe in his mouth, to which I furnished the motto "*ex fumo dare lucem.*" The good man was highly pleased with the compliment, and gallantly saluting the back of her hand, he assured her he was well pleased so unpleasant a dispute should end in smoke. The next Sunday I remarked that he chose for his text the passage which declares, that the price of a good woman is above rubies.

In the summer of the year 1786, all the world, in our part of the country, went over to the county-town to witness, what was then a novelty, the ascent of an air-balloon. The Archdeacon, however, would not budge. At this time, the naturalists and chemists were beginning to take the lead over the mathematicians in the Royal Society, and the doctor, though not a fellow, was, as in duty bound, a staunch partizan of the supremacy of the mathematicians; and he accordingly regarded these exhibitions of modern science as nothing better than mere quackery. Besides, the invention was French; and he added, with his accustomed justice of reflection, "*timeo danaos et dona ferentes.*"

When pressed to join a party from our village, he asked, "Where is the pleasure of seeing two fools setting Providence impiously at defiance?"—a remark I have frequently had occasion to recall.

Our village surgeon, whom the doctor particularly disliked, on account of his having studied at Edinburgh, and been intimate with Hume, presumed somewhat too jocosely to reply, "You are afraid lest they should get too near heaven, and discover how little you doctors of divinity know about the matter." I never saw our friend so seriously angry as then. Rebuking the surgeon for his levity and indifference to religion, which he said belonged to his cloth, he added with prophetic solemnity, "This reigning taste for experiment bodes no good: Franklin's rods, and his blasphemous boast of '*eripuit fulmen cœlo*,' have deeply injured the world. Men no longer can say, '*cœlo tonantem credimus*.' He who is over-solicitous concerning second causes, is but too apt to overlook the first."

For the rest of that evening he sat silent, nor did he ever afterwards hear balloons mentioned, without launching forth some contemptuous sarcasm on the subject.

Another fashionable folly, which roused the indignation of the archdeacon, was the unlimited vogue of "Tristram Shandy." Sterne he personally disliked. "That fellow," he would say, "is a disgrace to the church, his religion is full of levity, and his levity is not full of religion." The

antithesis is striking. I have a paper in the doctor's hand-writing, containing many palpable instances of Sterne's plagiarism, though he never could be brought to own that he had read his works.

At the breaking out of the French revolution, the archdeacon, in common with all right-thinking men, was seriously alarmed, lest the principles of the people of England should be injured; and when Burke published his diatribe against that insane and atheistical ebullition of a stiff-necked generation, he made a journey to London, solely to see and converse with the author: availing himself of the opportunity to solicit the then vacant archdeaconry—an energy wonderful in a person of his years and infirmities.

Burke received him as he deserved, and invited him to Beaconsfield. Pitt was of the party, and port and politics were the order of the day. The port was as sound as the politics, and the politics as old as the port; so the doctor, we may be sure, enjoyed not a little this "feast of reason and flow of soul." Indeed the occurrences of that evening were a constant theme of conversation with him for the rest of his life.

Among the many anecdotes that he was in the habit of relating, apropos to this subject, I shall repeat only one or two. The French armies were at that time in rapid advance, and the funds were falling. Pitt, for once in his life, spoke despondingly, and Burke said something of the chivalry of stock-

jobbing being gone; but Botherum reminded the minister of the just confidence which a British premier ought ever to place in Divine Providence, which would not suffer a set of miscreants to prosper, who had not only killed their king, but had actually abolished tithes. A foreign ambassador, who was at table, whispered something about "*gros bataillons*," which the doctor was not Frenchman enough to understand, but which made Pitt smile. Botherum, however, was not discouraged, and pledging the master of the house in a bumper, he thundered forth, with an air of inspiration,

Ω παιδες Ἑλληνων, ἰτε, ἐλευθεροῦτε πατριδα, &c.

Pitt immediately rose from his seat, and shaking him very-heartily by the hand, replied, "With such right-thinking persons on our side, we are confident against the world in arms; and so, doctor, I hope for the honour of your vote at Cambridge on the approaching election." The doctor lamented that the distance of his living, and his advancing years, had prevented his voting the last time, but that being now in London, he would certainly revisit Cambridge, expressly to vote. Pitt repeated the word "distance," and significantly shaking his head, said, "*that* might be remedied ere long."

The conversation turning, during dinner, on taxation, Burke, I think it was, defended a lavish public expenditure, as the best encouragement to national industry; and many instances were adduced by the company in confirmation of the remark. "Still,"

said Dundas, holding his glass to the light, to look for the bee's wing, "it is a thousand pities, so it is, that such wine as this should be taxed, when a halfpenny a pot on porter would raise a greater revenue." Pitt replied, that something now and then must be conceded to please the populace; but he added facetiously, that "he was sorry to lean so hard upon Harry's *prime article of consumption;*" "at which," said Botherum, "we all laughed very heartily; and I ventured to add, that the port being under the protection of the church, ought to possess a privilege of exemption; and that I was sure Mr. Pitt was too high-minded to regard the *civium ardor prava jubentium.*" A certain bishop, who was present, observed, that he did not see who the people were concerned with the matter—they have nothing to do with the taxes but to pay them. Botherum replied, "Very true, the imposition of taxes rests with the Chancellor of the Exchequer," and turning to Mr. Pitt, he quoted Virgil's "hæ tibi erunt artes," &c.; and nothing could exceed the emphasis with which he ejaculated the "TU *regere imperio populos.*" The bishop begged to drink wine with the doctor, and thus commenced a friendship, which only ended with the lives of the parties.

Three days after this visit, Dr. Botherum got his archdeaconry, and on his return home he wrote his famous pamphlet against Priestley, to shew his gratitude to the administration. An angry and acrimonious polemical discussion was the conse-

quence, in which there was no lack of abuse on either side; but the archdeacon used to say, that Priestley was not worth the powder and shot: "he is a shabby fellow, sir, and not orthodox even in vituperation." In his heart, however, he was far from despising his antagonist, and was even flattered by the idea that the controversy had been the remote cause of the destruction of Priestley's house; "though," he would add jocosely, "if the dog's own books were in his library, I am sorry for their fate—they should have been burnt by the public executioner."

While in London, Botherum was elected fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and put in his elaborate account of Braintown Parva; in which he proved it to have been a Roman station, and the site of a druidical college. On this occasion, he presented the society with three fragments of broken pottery and a pike-head, which he had himself dug from a barrow; and he received the thanks of that learned body.

About this time also the archdeacon supplied to Sylvanus Urban, Gent., an accurate description of the monumental inscriptions in Muckle Pudding churchyard, together with a picturesque view of the ruins of the chancel (Gent. Mag. V. ccccxxiii); which, truth to tell, was drawn by the parish clerk, as was the fac-simile of a stone, bearing a Celtic record, written in the tree character. This latter drew upon the archdeacon an unpleasant controversy: for the surgeon before-mentioned (probably

out of pique in the matter of the balloon), privately conveyed intelligence to a rival antiquary, that what the doctor took for "Divus Belus," was merely the initials of a stonemason's name (who was yet living in the memory of the older parishioners), turned upside down! *

Upon turning the stone (as the archdeacon would have it) topsy-turvy, or, as his opponent maintained, the right side upwards, there did certainly manifest itself a provoking resemblance to the Roman capitals and Arabic numerals, necessary to establish the hostile hypothesis, which caused the wicked wits of the day a horse-laugh at the doctor's expence. But he made an excellent defence, and clearly proved that *his* inscription *ought* to have been erected in the very place where it was found; and strengthened his case with great erudition, by many pregnant analogies. In the appendix to this paper he gave an account of the bowl of a tobacco-pipe, found five and twenty feet below the surface of a peat-bog, in the neighbourhood of a Roman station; which distinctly proves that the Romans were in the habit of smoking, if not tobacco, at least some indigenous weed; a neglected verity, corroborated by many classical texts, especially by Virgil's account of Cacus—

> "Ille autem
> Faucibus ingentem fumum, mirabile dictu,
> Evomit;"

* This mistake is said also to have been made by an Irish antiquary.

and by the satirists "*fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ.*" The "*fumus et vapor Balnearum,*" also mentioned by Valerius Maximus, shews that smoking was among the luxuries of the bath; and Martial speaks of cigar selling—"*vendere vanos circum Palatia fumos,*" as a common mode of getting bread.

I have little to add to what the world already knows concerning the doctor's Greek translation of Chevy Chase, which drew upon him the ill-natured epithet of "seventh form schoolboy" from Matthias, a reproach which he felt very keenly. "Many wise and good men," he remarked to me, with tears in his eyes, "had exercised themselves in Greek translations from the English poets, nor could he think it unworthy of a divine to write the language of the New Testament; but," he added, with a tone of voice singularly awful, "the run which is made against Greek is part of the jacobinical conspiracy against social order, and it was inconsistent in Matthias thus to assist it. He who reviles learning, wars with his superiors, and is wanting in that humility and prostration of intellect, without which there can be no true religion."

The archdeacon was among those who believed in the authenticity of Ireland's Shakespearian MSS.; and, as he had been intimate with Dr. Farmer at Cambridge, and was an enthusiast in all that concerned the great poet, he could not bear with patience to be jeered on his mistake. "Sir," he would say, "if the play were not written by Shake-

speare, it ought to have been; not indeed for the matter (though "Vortigern" is as good as "Titus Andronicus"), but on account of the evidence, which he who doubted, might as well have doubted the thirty-nine articles."

Another point on which he was sore, was Pitt's resignation about the Catholic question. He had never believed that statesman in earnest on the matter, and to the last declared his conduct on this occasion an hallucination wholly inexplicable.

Though he had given his support to the Addington administration, he could not but forgive his old favourite, as soon as he found him once more at the head of affairs. "*Nemo,*" he said, "*nemo omnibus horis sapit;* but in any other man the thing would have been unpardonable."

The archdeacon holding good preferment, it was often thought that he would marry; and when he new painted the parsonage-house, we all set it down that his friendship for a certain maiden lady would have terminated in a conjugal alliance. Whether through the doctor's fault, or the lady's, I could never learn, but the marriage did not take place. That he would have made a good family man, is barely possible. He was a professed misogamist, and never was at a loss for a quotation from Euripides, or a sly hit from Juvenal against the sex; from which I more than suspect he had in early life received a slight. "Sir," he would say, "there is one thing in which I think the Papists are right, and that is, in representing their good women

without a head; a piece of humour in which, by the by, he rarely indulged before the ladies, so great was his sense of propriety.

Of the great men of his own times, Parr was the especial object of the archdeacon's dislike. He said he knew about as much of Greek as an Athenian blacksmith;* and that he was only not a Manichean, because he would not have acknowledged a good *principle* (punning on the word), if he had been acquainted with it. Porson, he said, was a sot and a buffoon, and worse still—a whig; "but the scoundrel understood metres." With neither of them would he condescend to be personally acquainted. His reviews of Gilbert Wakefield were models of causticity,—for the writings of this schismatic he treated with a memorable severity.

About the time when Sir S. Romilly was endeavouring to overturn our judicial institutions, the archdeacon preached his celebrated assize sermon before the judges. In this sermon he laid it down, that as Christianity is part of the law of the land, it must follow that the law of the land cannot be contradictory to Christianity, and consequently, that to alter the law is as bad as to alter the Gospel. He praised the wisdom of the Medes and Persians, and eulogized the then existing government, whose hostility to all amelioration was truly Asiatic.

* Said by Bentley of Anacreon Barnes.

For this sermon, which he printed with the motto of "*stare super vias antiquas*," he was so unmercifully handled by the opposition journals, that he once told me with great glee, "he was not without good hopes of being kicked into the prelacy." Whether this promotion was, indeed, contemplated, it is now hard to say; for death deprived the parish of Braintown Parva of its ornament, and the world of its luminary, somewhat suddenly, just as he was putting a finishing hand to his treatise, "*De Inutilitatis Præstantiâ in Disciplinis Academicis*," in which he ably vindicated the British universities, and proved by the equation $a+b-x^n=0$, that the whole genius and talent of the English country gentlemen were exclusively due to a discipline, that palpably refuted the maxim of "*non ex quovis ligno*."

Upon this point the archdeacon was urgent in season and out of season, and nothing vexed him more than to hear Cambridge called a Whig university. "No, sir," he would say, "Glasgow is a Whig university, Edinburgh is a Whig university, but an English university cannot be Whig, for it is essentially prelatical. Cambridge may be a shade less Tory than Oxford, but every day the distinction is wearing out (and he would add, with a deep expression of devotion and gratitude), I thank God for that."

It was with a view to strengthening the weak in this particular, that he wrote the treatise above mentioned. In the Scotch universities, he con-

tended, where they taught the useful sciences, the pupils and professors were all democrats and infidels; whereas the more abstract pursuits of Oxford and Cambridge, having no bearing on every-day life, preserved a gentleman from low sympathies, and prevented convenient prejudices from being too closely examined by the students. The king, he justly observed, could make a peer of whom he pleased; but Oxford and Cambridge could alone form a truly aristocratic mind, and level genius to the senatorial calibre.

Thus did this truly great man die, as he had lived, the steady and able advocate of the wisdom of our ancestors—the studious cultivator of all those inapplicable sciences, which preserve mankind in innocence, docility, and obedience, to the powers that be—and the opponent of that *ignis fatuus* illumination, which, under the modest name of innovation, is in reality nothing less than revolution. It cannot be sufficiently lamented, that he passed so much of his life in the obscurity of a country living; and however beneficial the accident might have been to myself, which was the cause of my friendship and converse with such a mind, I cannot but regret that his acceptance of a college preferment should have separated him from his Alma Mater. As head of St. John's, his abilities would have found a more congenial application; and his influence would not have been without weight, in checking that flood of *soi disant* liberality, which has changed the character of par-

liament, and, by repealing the penal laws, has given a death-blow to our glorious constitution.

But "*diis aliter visum;*" and against the decrees of Providence, however inscrutable, it becomes not a Christian (as the Doctor would have said) to recalcitrate. The people have imagined a vain thing, and out of the very idolatry of their affection for Popery a rod has been formed, to punish their backslidings. Most fervently do I pray, however, that a time for penitence is left to this nation; and in the idea that the example of such a life as Doctor Botherum's cannot be without its use upon the rising generation, I here present to my countrymen this faithful portraiture of him, who (as there is too much reason to fear) will prove the last of the old race of genuine English churchmen.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
P. SHOBERL, JUN. 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET,
PRINTER TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT.

13, *Great Marlborough Street.*

POPULAR

NEW WORKS OF FICTION,

JUST PUBLISHED BY

MR. COLBURN,

TO BE HAD AT ALL THE LIBRARIES.

I.

THE MONEYED MAN;

OR, THE LESSON OF A LIFE.

By HORACE SMITH, Esq.

One of the Authors of "Rejected Addresses." 3 vols. post 8vo.

II.

GREVILLE;

OR, A SEASON IN PARIS.

By Mrs. GORE. 3 vols. post 8vo.

"As every body goes to Paris, every body should read Mrs. Gore's new novel, Greville; or, a Season in that delightful metropolis—by the publication of which, the authoress has conferred a real benefit on the public in several respects. First, she has given them something new—and secondly, her lively pages contain a view of Paris, socially considered, such as no writer but herself is qualified to afford. The manner in which Mrs. Gore has introduced her readers at once into the heart of society in the French capital, is admirable. In short, it could scarcely be thought possible that a single work could so completely familiarize the reader with the society of a foreign capital, as this novel of 'Greville;' and no English person intending to visit Paris should fail to study its sparkling details."—*Sun.*

III.

POPULAR TRADITIONS OF ENGLAND,

By JOHN ROBY, Esq., M.R.S.L.

3 vols., post 8vo., with numerous Engravings on Wood.

"An author whose works have been quoted and commended by Sir Walter Scott, has no slight claims on public attention, and such a position is occupied by Mr. Roby. The lovers of romantic adventure will dwell upon these records with delight, while the antiquarian will find in them much food for meditation. Such a collection of English traditions supplies valuable additions to our existing stock of knowledge, either as materials for illustrating English history, and manners and customs now obsolete, or as legends having truth for their basis. As relics of the past rescued from oblivion, they are a most interesting addition to the literature of our country."—*Conservative Journal.*

IV.

PETER PRIGGINS,

THE COLLEGE SCOUT.

Edited by THEODORE HOOK, Esq.
3 vols., post 8vo., with Illustrations, by PHIZ.

"An admirable sketch of a College Scout, whose sayings and doings are the *Sam Slickiana* of Alma Mater. These sketches are, indeed, the most laughter-provoking we ever read."—*Age.*

V.

THE NAVAL SURGEON.

By the Author of "Cavendish," "The Flying Dutchman," &c. 3 vols.

"We consider this novel to be the best that Mr. Neale has yet written. It is a very admirable transcript of naval life, told with great truth and feeling, and abounding both in incident and character. One of its chief attractions to those who remember the original, will be the life-like portrait which the author has drawn, in the character of Captain Howard, of one of the finest fellows that ever trod the deck of a man-of-war. The salient points of Captain Howard's character, as a bold and accomplished sailor, are finely brought out in the spirit-stirring and animated description of the running fight between the Epaminondas and the strange seventy-four, whose history remains a mystery to the end. We have rarely read any thing more interesting than the account of this chase. Mr. Neale's powers are very various, and he sketches character with great freedom and rapidity; his Dr. Caustic is an excellent specimen of dry humour and singularity. Nor is he less at fault in the more romantic portions of his narrative, happily blending a very interesting story with the shifting adventures of a naval surgeon's life. We should be glad to see that the case of the assistant-surgeons of the navy had received the attention from the Lords of the Admiralty, which the author very justly claims for that meritorious class of officers."—*Morning Herald.*

VI.

THE HISTORY OF A FLIRT.

RELATED BY HERSELF.

Second Edition. 3 vols., post 8vo.

"A very superior novel."—TIMES.

"Among the best novels of its kind for many years given to the world by the English press."—ATHENÆUM.

VII.

LEGENDARY TALES OF THE HIGHLANDS.

By SIR THOMAS DICK LAUDER, BART.,
With Engravings by PHIZ, Illustrator of "Nicholas Nickleby."
3 vols., post 8vo.

"These volumes contain the best tales of the north countrie which we have looked into for a long period."—ATHENÆUM.

VIII.

LOVE AND WAR;

OR, THE ROMANCE OF MILITARY LIFE.

Comprising Stories of, and Scenes in, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, &c.

By Capt. QUILLINAN. 3 vols.

"The most clever and spirited production of its kind that has hitherto proceeded from the many gifted men who have been tempted to exchange the sword for the pen. We know of nothing of the kind which more pleasantly blends the attraction of high romance with the force and truth of real life."—*Naval and Military Gazette.*

IX.

OLIVER CROMWELL.

AN HISTORICAL ROMANCE.

Edited by HORACE SMITH, Esq.

Author of "Brambletye House," &c. 3 vols.

"The most powerful historical romance we have perused since the light of Scott's genius was extinguished in rayless night."—CALEDONIAN MERCURY.

"We may commend the battle-scenes in this work as about the most spirited and thrilling since Scott described the gathering at Loudon Hill and Bothwell Brigg."—ATHENÆUM.

X.

THE SECRETARY OF MACCHIAVELLI;

OR, THE SIEGE OF FLORENCE.

By DANIEL MACARTHY, Esq.

3 vols., post 8vo.

"A most powerfully written novel."—WEEKLY CHRONICLE.

"This clever novel is little, if at all, inferior to the most popular of Mr. James's productions."—NAVAL AND MILITARY GAZETTE.

"This very spirited romance, abounding with events of great historical interest, lays claim to a high place amongst the works of fiction of the present day. There are passages in it that are not exceeded in beauty or power by any romance writer of our time."—MORNING HERALD.

XI.

THE CASHMERE SHAWL.

By Captain WHITE.

Author of "The King's Page," "Almack's Revisited," &c. 3 vols.

"We welcome the reappearance of this highly-gifted author in the literary ranks. We predict a great success for this 'Cashmere Shawl'—the Ladies especially should envelop ther minds for some few hours with this visionary and magnificent article of gorgeous adornment. In these volumes the reader will find a variety as charming as it is abundant; he will be reminded by their humour of Rabelais, and by their poetry of Thomas Moore, with a troop of Peris in his imagination."—*Metropolitan.*

COMPANION TO THE WAVERLEY NOVELS.

Now in the course of Publication, each Work complete in a single volume, elegantly bound in cloth, price 6s.; printed uniformly with Byron and Scott, and beautifully embellished with the Portraits of the Authors, and other Engravings, by the Findens and other eminent Artists,

COLBURN'S
MODERN
STANDARD NOVELISTS:

A SELECT COLLECTION OF

The best Works of Fiction

OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED ENGLISH WRITERS, WHICH CANNOT BE PROCURED IN ANY OTHER COLLECTION.

Works already published in this Collection,

Either of which may be had separately, price only 6s. each.

SIR E. L. BULWER'S PELHAM
SIR E. L. BULWER'S DEVEREUX
SIR E. L. BULWER'S DISOWNED
MR. WARD'S TREMAINE
MR. H. SMITH'S BRAMBLETYE HOUSE
MR. H. SMITH'S ZILLAH
CAPTAIN MARRYAT'S FRANK MILDMAY
MR. LISTER'S GRANBY
MR. JAMES'S RICHELIEU
MR HOOK'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS—FIRST SERIES
MR. HOOK'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS—SECOND SERIES
MR. HOOK'S SAYINGS AND DOINGS—THIRD SERIES
LADY MORGAN'S FLORENCE MACARTHY
LADY MORGAN'S O'DONNEL
MR. GLEIG'S CHELSEA PENSIONERS

Opinions of the Press.

"'Colburn's Modern Standard Novelists' present a series of those works of fiction that have most tended, with the writings of Sir Walter Scott, to elevate this description of literature. This publication presents a concentration of imaginative genius."—*Globe.*

"The collection continues to realize the most sanguine expectations of that large class of readers who, with ourselves, are anxious to have all the best modern works of fiction brought out on the plan which Mr. Colburn has so judiciously adopted, and in which elegance and economy are so happily combined."—*Sunday Times.*

"A truly popular undertaking. The series so got up and embellished, and so cheap, must extend the fame even of the author of 'Pelham.'"—*Literary Gazette.*

HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,

GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

AGENTS: FOR SCOTLAND, BELL AND BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH; FOR IRELAND, JOHN CUMMING, DUBLIN.

To be had of all Booksellers throughout the Kingdom.

00097850

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 26 March, 2016